A DIVINE DISCOVERY OF SINCERITY,

According to its proper and peculiar nature: very profitable for all sorts of persons to peruse.

First Preached, and now Published, for the good of Gods Church in generall.

By *Nicholas Lockyer* Master of Arts.

Psalm. 78. 37.
For their heart was not right with him; neither were they stedfast in his covenant.
Psalm. 119. 80.
Let my heart be sound in thy Statutes, that I be not ashamed.

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A
DIVINE DISCOVERY
OF
SINCERITY.

TO THE

VERTUOUS LADY BRIDGET LYDDELL,

My much honoured Aunt: Grace and peace be multiplied by Jesus Christ.

MAdam: *'Tis Gods command to* Abraham, *and in him to us,* That we should walk before him, and be perfect. *Absolute perfection God doth not there mean, but intentionall: which is, when we desire and endeavour with* David, *to have all our wayes conformed to all Gods Statutes. Intentionall perfection is no other but sincere walking; and what this is, this Tract now humbly presented to your Ladiship, will plainly make knowne unto you. A sincere heart,* is a heart after Gods own heart; *which of all Iewels which the Gentry and Nobility weare, is the most resplendent, in the brest and bosome to bee worn. The*

richeſt Ieweller, Chriſt, proffers this pearle of great price, without mony, or mony-worth, and the multitude ſleight it, as a low priſed thing, not worth the ſeeking after; but your Ladyſhip hath otherwiſe learned Chriſt: Many things, Madam, may be convenient, but one is neceſſary; to wit, a ſincere heart. The acquiring of this, is the worke of our whole life: the ſetting forth of this, in its nature and luſtre, is the work of Chriſts Miniſters; the leaſt and unworthieſt of all which, is your Nephew, which hath in this tract, done ſomething to this effect; from which if your Ladiſhip ſhall reape an increaſe of good, to that ſweet ſtocke you have, I ſhall humbly bleſſe God. To whoſe bleſſing, I commend your ſelfe and worthy Family; this worke, and the unworthy Author,

Your much oblieged Nephew,

Nicholas Lockyer.

TO

To the Christian Reader.

CHristian Reader; Two things should bee the principall matter of thy study; Christ, and thine owne heart. The latter, to know thine owne misery; the former, to know Gods rich mercy, and how thou mayst be made partaker of it. So deceitfull is the heart of man naturally, that he *thinks himselfe rich, and increased in goods*, and knowes not that he *is poore, and blind, miserable, wretched, and naked.* And untill this deceit and unsoundnesse be discovered, men will never seeke out for Christ, which is that *Gold tried in the fire*, which indeed makes poore man rich; and that *white rayment*, *Iohn* speakes of, which indeed makes naked man comely, and covers all his deformity, from the all-seeing eye of him that is perfect purity. The true knowledge of thine owne heart, this little Tract will helpe thee to, by the blessing of God; if thou seriously peruse

it

it, and humbly ſeeke to him, who is the ſearcher and diſcoverer of all hearts, to go along with thee in the reading of it. Which when once thou haſt gotten, thou wilt be capable of the ſaving knowledge of Chriſt and reſtleſſe till thou haſt obtained it. And this when acquired, will reſolve thy doubting, comfort thy mourning, and ſtabliſh thy ſtaggering ſoule: 'twill give thee peace and joy unſpeakable here, and bring thee to glory and joy incomprehenſible hereafter. To which, the Lord bring thee, and me.

Nicholas Lockyer.

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III. Proposition.

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THE

The first Sermon.

2 COR. 1. 12.

For our rejoycing is this, the testimony of our Conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-wards.

NO grace, how glorious soever in the eye of man, goes for good weight in the eye of God, without sincerity: The greatest man in the world, weighed in the Ballance of the Sanctuary, without this will be accounted too light for Heaven. 'Tis a very needful subject then, that this Text plainly proffers to our consideration. And as excellent in it selfe, as needfull to us, is sincerity. 'Tis the precious extract of all graces; and to call this a grace is too little. 'Tis that which gives to every grace its true lustre in the eye of God; and to call any thing a grace in man, without this, is too much. 'Tis the glory of al graces as the Sun is the glory of all the Stars: tis the vitall blood of the soule; which that it may run in the veins of you all, unto your eternall happines, have

I choſen this Text to inſiſt on : *For our rejoycing is this, the teſtimony of our conſcience, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, not with fleſhly wiſdome, but by the grace of God, we have had our converſation in the world, &c.*

No condition is truly joyous without, and no condition is truly dolorous with ſincerity. If a man be never ſo rich, never ſo honourable, yet if not withall ſincere, there is no true joy in ſuch a man : he laughs, but in the midſt of laughter, his heart is oft-times ſad, and his conſcience ſpoils his ſport. On the other hand; if a man be never ſo poore, never ſo much oppreſſed, which is the deadlieſt, and the moſt oppoſite enemy to joy of all, yet if that man be ſincere, his heart may be as full of joy, as it can hold, for all this; as you may ſee in theſe words read, *For our rejoycing is this, the teſtimony of our conſcience, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, &c.* *Paul* and *Timothy* have been ſincere ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt, for the good of his Church amongſt the Gentiles, and in this they had tranſcendent comfort in the midſt of all the miſery they met withall.

'Tis not miſery, but ſinne, that robs the ſoule of joy. Let a man labour to live ſincerely, and then let men and devils do what they can, or will, ſuch a man ſhall never be bereft of joy : he ſhall have joy in poverty, joy in diſgrace, he ſhall have joy in priſon, as much as in liberty, and much more; ſo had *Paul* and *Timothy*, which made them thus bravely break out in the midſt of miſery, *For our rejoycing is this, the teſtimony of our Conſcience*

science, that in simplicity and Godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdome, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the World, and more abundantly to you-wards.

These words are the Apostles divine narration of their happy condition in misery. And they containe two principall things, usefull for all men to be well acquainted withall: to wit, true joy, and the true ground of this desireable grace; which the Apostle here makes, sincerity, and that testimony which Conscience gives thereof to the Soule. *For our rejoycing is this*, what? why, *the testimony of our Conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity*, that is, in integrity and uprightnesse, *not with fleshly wisdome*, that is, not with humane policy and eloquence, as men proudly depending upon our owne parts, and subtilly seeking our owne ends, in our preaching and living, *but by the Grace of God*, ἀλλ' ἐν χάριτι Θεοῦ, *but in the grace of God*, saith the originall: that is, in the strength and assistance of God, which is a speciall fruit of his grace and favour, *we have had our conversation in the world*; that is, we have carried our selves in life and doctrine amongst all, *and more abundantly to you-wards*; περισσοτέρως δὲ πρὸς ὑμᾶς, *but especially amongst you*, saith the Originall.

Divine joy is set forth unto us in this Text, according to its proper subject, and according to its proper rise. The proper subject of divine joy, is the *righteous man*, as the Psalmist frequently notes: And this man is made the subject of Divine joy in my Text, *For* [*our*] *rejoycing*, &c. that is, we which are sincere: hypocrites have nothing to doe with

joy is ſuitable to their ſpirits, deceitfull; that which will flee from them, and not ſtand by them, as this joy of the Apoſtles did, when trials come.

For our καύχημα, boaſting is this, ſo the word in the originall ſtrictly taken, ſignifies. Divine boaſting, notes Divine joy in the conſpicuous act thereof: It notes joy, as it hath ſtrongly ſeized upon the heart within; and it notes joy, as it hath ſtrongly ſeized upon the tongue, and face, and hands without: ſo that it is all one as if the Apoſtle had ſaid, *The cauſe of our ſtrong and open rejoycing is this.*

What? That they had made proviſion for the fleſh to fulfill the luſts of it? No, divine joy hath not ſuch a Diabolicall riſe: The proper riſe of divine joy, is the teſtimony of a pure Conſcience, concerning the uprightneſſe of a mans converſation; and this was the riſe of *Pauls* and *Timothies* joy, in affliction. *Their Conſcience bore witneſſe with them, that in integrity and uprightneſſe, not in flattery, policy, and ſubtilty, they had preached and lived amongſt all men, as thoſe that depended upon the ſtrength and ayd of Chriſt in every thing, and not upon any abilities of their owne, though they were endowed with greater humane gifts then any the falſe Apoſtles had. Thus they carried themſelves in a plain, down right, faithfull way, where ever they came to publiſh the Goſpell of Chriſt, but eſpecially amongſt the Corinthians.* To other Churches *Paul* uſed a more inſinuating way of preaching; but to this Church of the *Corinthians*, all plainneſſe & homelineſſe; ſparing no expreſſions, that might fully ſet

to forth their wicked wayes, and throughly awaken their drowsie consciences, as hereafter in due place (God willing) I shall shew unto you. The Church of the *Corinthians*, of all the Churches which *Paul* or other of the Apostles had planted, was most loose every way; and therefore *Paul* did not content himselfe with hints and overtures; and wrap up bitter Pils, in sugred glib-go-down words; but with all godly boldnesse and plainnesse, beyond what he did to other Churches, hee reproved them for, and upbraided them with their wickednesse; which is that he would haue us apprehend, in this last clause of my Text. *But specially among ſt you.*

Severall propositions are to be noted in this verse thus opened: as first this, *That in simplicity and godly sincerity, we ought to have our conversation in this world.* This truth is plainly intimated by the Apostle; for he rejoyced that he had so ordered his conversation, as Christ required; not flattering, and fauning, with fleshly wisdom in his preaching, to sooth men in their sinnes, and to bring about his own ends, as false apostles did; but faithfully reproving every vice, sparing no plainenesse of speech, to such as otherwise would not be brought to see and bewaile their sinnes. Whether this way of preaching were pleasing or displeasing to the world; whether it brought honour or disgrace to himselfe from the world, hee heeded not whilst he knew 'twas suitable walking to the Will of God. Doctrine deduction

Doct. 2. A second proposition is this, *That conscience can give testimony, concerning the simplicity, or hypocrisie of a mans conversation.* This truth is also plainly intimated, in that the Apostle makes the testimony of his conscience concerning his Integrity, the ground of his joy. *For our rejoycing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdome,* (which had bin hypocriticall) *but by the grace of God we have had our conversation in the World, &c.*

Doct. 3. A third proposition is this, *That consciousnesse to our selves, of the simplicity and sincerity of our conversation, will yeeld us joy in the midst of troubles.* This truth is also intimated by the Apostle; for in the midst of all his troubles and miseries, he rejoyced in this, that his conscience could beare witnesse with him, that *in simplicity and godly sincerity, he had ordered his conversation in this world.*

Doct. 4. A fourth and last point observable is this, *That there be speciall times and occasions for the declaration of sincerity, which ought to be observed, and answerably to declare and shew our selves in our places.* This truth is also plainly set forth unto us in the Text; for *Paul* and *Timothy* thus carried themselves in their places toward the Church of *Corinth* which became very openly and grossely wicked, περισσοτέρως δὲ μᾶλλον ὑμᾶς, *but specially amongst you.* They had declared sinceritie and uprightnesse in their ministery, amongst other Churches by a faithfull reproving of them, as occasion required, but no Church so scandalously carried themselves as this Church, and therefore this

this Church needed, above all others, to be more throughly dealt withall; which the Apostles, as sincere men considered, and answerably carried themselves.

I begin with the first of these, to wit, *That in simplicity and godly sincerity we ought to have our conversation in this world.* *Paul* could not justly have joyed in the simplicity and sincerity of his conversation, had not his conscience told him, that so to walke, was to walke as Christ had commanded him. Christs charge to his Apostles (when he sent them forth) was, that they should bee ἀκέραιοι ὡς αἱ περιστεραι, *simple as doves*: that they should teach men to *observe all things whatsoever he commanded them*: now, *Pauls* conscience and *Timothies* both bore witnesse with them, that thus they had walked in their places, and this made them to rejoyce in the midst of all the hardship they underwent. As they had this charge in particular, so they had this charge in generall, with all the seed of *Abraham*, in these words, *Walke before me, and be thou perfect*: that is, sincere, *Gen.* 17. 1. So that they had broken a double bond, had they not simply and sincerely ordered their conversation.

Doct. 1

Mat. 10. 16.

Mat. 28. 20.

Simplicity] is a terme which sometimes notes folly. *How long ye simple ones, will ye love simplicitie, and fools hate knowledge? Prov.* 1. 22. In my Text, this terme is opposed to double mindednesse, and such men have usually more wit then they use well; and signifies an unity and identity between the heart and tongue; what the tongue sayes, the heart really intends: and so taken,

it founds the same with sincerity; and therefore coupled together here by the Apostle, as *Synonyma's*, *contermini*, words of the same signification.

Sincerity is either *Morall*, or *Theologicall*. Morall sincerity, I call such a quallification of spirit, as leads a man to doe to others as he would be done to himselfe. A rectitude of spirit in relation to men. Such a sincere man ('tis probable) was *Abimelech* King of *Gerar*. He tooke *Abrahams* wife unto him, she being very beautifull, but this hee would not have done, had hee knowne her to have beene *Abrahams* wife; for *Abraham* had told him, that she was his sister; and therefore God bore witnesse with *Abimelech* concerning his integrety. *In the integrity of my heart, and innocency of my hands have I done this*, said *Abimelech*; and God said unto him, *Yea I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart*, *Gen.* 20. 6. Such a sincere man was that young man which came to our Saviour, and told him, that he had kept *all the Commandements from his youth*. He gave to every man his due, and lived orderly amongst his neighbours, and therefore he judged himselfe as good as needed to be.

Morall sincerity, is close hypocrisie. Morall sincerity is like some counterfeit pearls, which make a faire shew to looke upon, but deceive both buyer and beholder. Multitudes thinke that because their spirits are so over-ruled by God, that they do no injury to man that therefore they are indowed with *godly sincerity*, ειλικρινεια Θεου, the

the sincerity of God, as the otiginall here calls it. The truth is, Morall sincerity, is the sincerity of God too; for 'tis his restraining corrupt man, which otherwise would bee as prophane towards man outwardly, as he is towards God inwardly. *I withheld thee from sinning against me*, said God to *Abimelech*, *Gen.* 20. 6. A morall sincere man, is but an out-side holy man, but observes it not; and therefore (I thinke) called by some, A close hypocrite. But this is not that *sincerity of God*, which my Text speaks of.

Godly sincerity, or the *sincerity of God*, which my Text speaks of, *is a speciall worke of God upon the soule of man, making him laborious, to walke according to Gods Will in all things, that God may have all the glory due to his name.*

First, I say, that godly sincerity is a *speciall worke of God upon the soule, &c.* This *Genus*, the Apostle confirmes in my Text, calling sincerity εἰλικρίνειαν θεοῦ, *the sincerity of God.* That is, that sincerity which is after a speciall manner wrought of God in the heart of man. So likewise elsewhere the Apostle solemnly prayes for sincerity, in the behalfe of the *Philippians*; which plainly shewes, that sincerity is not *Quid proveniens a natura*, a thing growing naturally in man. *And this I pray* (saith the Apostle) *that your love may abound, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere, and without offence unto the day of Christ*, *Phil.* 1. 9. 10. *Genus in Definitione.*

The heart of man naturally is *deceitfull*, not sincere; *desperately wicked*, not truly good; more opposite to sincerity then to any thing:

as things corrupted, carry a greater dissimilitude to what they were, then to any thing else which they never were. The Devill is more opposite to the goodnesse of an Angell which once hee had, then to any lower good, which he never formally had; which is a torment that lies upon him, as a part of his judgement. *God made man upright*: that is, for qualification suitable to his owne will; apt and able to walke in all holy waies blamelesse. Man voluntarily losing this, as the Devill did that, through pride, is with the Devill, more dislike to himselfe, then to any thing below himselfe, he is more like a Lion, a Leopard, a Tyger, a Beare, a wolfe, a Serpent, a Toade, a Stocke, a Stone, then man in innocency; and more violently opposite to uprightnesse and justice naturally, then any creature below him is: and therefore is the heart of man naturally said to bee deceitfull [*above all things*] and desperately wicked [*beyond knowledge*] *Ier.* 17. 9. which is enough to demonstrate, that godly sincerity cannot be *a natura*; and if not of nature, then of grace. There is no faculty in this disjunctive argument.

Cumulus accidentium, in definitione.

Making a man laborious, &c.] that is, *constantly* laborious, *willingly* laborious, and laborious according to *all his strength*. First, sincerity is such a speciall worke of God upon the soule, that it makes a man *laborious* to doe the Will of God. *Solomon* confirmes this where he saith, *That the labour of the righteous tendeth to life*: that is, to a holy and happy life. A sincere man is laborious to lead a holy life, to order

Prov. 10 16.

der all his converſation, according to the holy rule of Gods Word. That thus this clauſe is to be interpreted, I collect from the following clauſe, which by way of *Antithesis*, the wiſe man delivers. *The fruit of the wicked to ſin.* The whole proverbe put together, hath the force of a compariſon in it. As the labour of the wicked tends to ſinne; ſo the labour of the righteous tends to holineſſe, and ſo conſequently to happineſſe. Sinceritie hath more in it, then an applauding of holineſſe: *Thou art more righteous then I: Thy going in and out before mee in the hoſt is good.* Sinceritie hath more in it then a lazie wiſhing for holineſſe. *O that I might die the death of the righteous, and that my laſt end might be like his!* Sinceritie is ſuch a ſpeciall worke of God upon the ſoule, that it ſets a man a labouring for holineſſe: *Wherefore we labour*, that is we which are ſincere, *that whether preſent or abſent, we may be accepted of him*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 9. that is, that wee may live holily, and die happily; whereas all other men labour after vanities, and ſo conſequently their labours tend to ſin, and ſo to death, as *Solomon* ſaith.

Sincerity is ſuch a ſpeciall worke of God upon the ſoule, that it makes a man ſee a tranſcendent worth in the will of God; and worth begets love, as the Sunne drawes forth the ſpring; and love begets labour, to attain the thing beloved. *Thy teſtimonies are wonderfull: therefore doth my ſoule keep them*, Pſal. 119. 129. *Thy teſtimonies are wonderfull:* that is, wonderfull righteous, juſt, and equall; and wonderfull ſweet, ſweeter

then the honey, or the hony-combe: *therefore doth my soul keep them.* That is, therefore doth my soul labour to keep them. As if he had said, I see such a trancendent purity and taste, such a transcendent sweetnesse in the testimonies of God, that my soul cannot chuse, but labour to walke in them.

Sincerity makes a man [*laborious*] to doe the Will of God, you see: that is, it makes a man *constantly, willingly,* and according to *all his strength,* industrious. That sincerity is such a speciall worke of God upon the soule, that makes a man [*constantly*] laborious to doe the will of God. *Paul* in whom sincerity was, confirmes. *And herein doe I exercise my selfe, to have* [*alwayes*] *a conscience void of offence, towards God and towards man. Act.* 24. 16. *Pauls* industry was, to obey the will of God to day, and the like next day and so he continued laborious every day, that he might have [*alwaies*] *a conscience void of offence, towards God and man. The high way of the upright is to depart from evill,* saith *Solomon,* Prov. 16. v. 17. that is, this is their daily soul-labour, the continuall road in which they travell, to get rid of sin, and to depart from that more and more. An hypocrite stumbles into this path of piety now and then, but this is not his high way, his usuall and daily road; he quickly gets out of it again: to this unconstant cloud (I conceive) *Solomon* opposeth the upright man, in the place forecited, who makes it a beaten high-way; hee is so constant in his endeavours to doe good, and to depart from evil. *I have enclined my heart, to performe thy statutes* [*alway*] [*even unto*

unto the end.] *Psal.* 119. 112. Sincerity, is such a speciall worke of God upon the soule, that inclines the heart to labour alwaies, to obey the will of God, which naturally is quickly weary of well doing. As the touch of a Loadstone, makes the needle to have a constant and restlesse inclination to the North: so godly sincerity, which I may call Gods secret touch of the heart, it makes the soule of a man have a constant and restlesse inclination, to walke in Gods waies; and his constant inclination makes him constantly laborious, to doe according to his daily desire. Sincerity is such a speciall worke of God upon the soule, that it makes a man to set God [alwaies] before him, and to doe all things daily as in his presence. *I have set the Lord* [*alwaies*] *before me*, saith *David*, Psalm. 16. 8. *For we are not as many, which corrupt the Word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God* [*in the sight of God*] *speake we in Christ*, 2 *Cor.* 2. 17. This is the genuine nature of sincerity, to make a man to set God [*alwaies*] before his eyes, and to doe things, as *beholding him that is invisible.*

Sincerity is such a speciall worke of God upon the soule, that it makes a man so constant in his endeavours to doe the will of God, that no opposition can make him to cease this labour. *The proud have had me greatly in derision: yet have I not declined from thy Law*, *Psal.* 119. 51. Proud wretches scoff'd at holy waies, and *Davids* holy endeavours to walke in them; nay, they did this *vehemently*; and yet *David* (being sincere) held on his holy course still. Nay, elsewhere he tels us, that they had *almost consumed him upon earth*, such was their malice

malice against him, *and yet he forsooke not his holy industry to obey Gods precepts*, *Psal.* 119. 87. Neither persecution of tongue nor hand, though never so vehement, can make a man, in whose heart godly sincerity is, to cease his industry to obey God, and walke in his waies. Hang him up as a *bottle in the smoake*, and yet he will not forget this worke he is about, to wit, to obey Gods statutes. Strong trials may make a sincere heart give backe for a time, so farre may they prevaile upon the remaining unsoundnesse, that is in the heart of man naturally, when at best; but they never prevaile, to make a sincere heart give off his labour to obey God.

Psal. 119. 83.

That sincerity is such a speciall worke of God upon the soule, as makes a man *willingly laborious* to doe the will of God, is hinted to us by that expression of the Prophet, *Isai.* 1. 19. *If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eate the good of the Land.* Sincere men are such as shall eate the good of that holy Land, which *Canaan* typified. So that this being laid downe, as an undeniable conclusion; we see that sincerity is such a speciall worke of God upon the soule, as toucheth the will, and so makes a man not only obedient, but willing and *obedient*, without which there is no eating, that is, enjoying of that holy Land, which *Canaan* typified. 'Twas that which God did much looke at, and stand upon, under the old covenant, that in all their sacrificall services (which were of cost and charge) they should be willing and chearefull, or else God would not account their obedience sincere: and therefore saith *David* an upright man,

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and that God and all his people might see his uprightnesse, in this chargeable way of serving God, *I will* [*freely*] *sacrifice unto thee, I will praise thy Name, O Lord, for it is good, I will freely sacrifice*; that is, willingly, chearefully, bountifully, &c. If willingnesse were so much lookt at, in their chargeable services under the old covenant, as a symptome of sincerity, much more doubtlesse doth God looke at it now, in his services of the new covenant, which are without expence; and answerably doubtlesse is it with sincere men for the generall, under the Gospell: to wit, more willing and chearfull in their services to God, then they under the Law were.

A sincere man doth not labour to serve God, of constraint, and by compulsion, as some servants and all beasts serve us: but of a ready minde, as one that hath chosen this way of life above all others, to walke in: *I have chosen the way of truth; thy judgements have I layd before me, Psal.* 119. 30. Sincerity is such a speciall worke of God upon the soule, that it makes a man see a greater beauty in Gods waies, then in any waies besides; and to taste a greater sweetnesse in these waies, then in any waies: and hence the soule is raised voluntarily and freely, to choose these waies to walke in, before all others. Sincerity is such a speciall worke of God upon the soule, that it makes a man see the word of God to be the straighteſt and trueſt rule of all others, to walke by; and therefore voluntarily chooseth this, before others, to lay before him as a rule to walke by, *I have chosen the way* [*of truth:*] *thy judgements have I layd before me.*

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That ſincerity is ſuch a ſpeciall Worke of God upon the ſoule, as makes a man laborious [*according to all his ſtrength*] to doe the will of God, we may lively ſee by ſome notable expreſſions of *Paul*. *I preſſe towards the marke, for the price of the high Calling, of God, in Chriſt Jeſus*, Phil. 3. 14. διωκω κατα σκοπον, *I purſue, I hunt*, ſaith the originall. Purſuing and hunting are actions wherein the creature puts forth all his ſtrength, to get what they deſire. Sincerity ſets a man to hit the white; and there muſt be all poſſible care in levelling, to doe this. Sincerity ſets the ſoule to win the priſe; (*for the price of the high calling*,) now a man that would win the prize muſt not runne lazily, but he muſt *nervis cunctis labore*, runne with all his ſtrength. So you have another notable expreſſion, *Phil.* 3. 13. *Forgetting thoſe things which are behind, and* [*reaching forth*] *unto thoſe things which are before*, επεκτεινομενος *extending, contending, ſtretching forth, reaching forth*; which are all termes (you know) which note the whole ſtrength put forth, to acquire a thing. Sincerity is ſuch a ſpeciall worke of God upon the ſoule, as makes a man to ſet before him no other rule, but perfection, to walke by; and then it makes a man labour with all his ſtrength, to walke exactly according to this rule; ει πως, *If by any meanes he may attaine unto the reſurrection of the dead*. That is, to doe the Will of God on earth as men riſen from the dead, and living with Chriſt in Heaven, doe. Hitherto tend alſo thoſe expreſſions in Scripture, of ſerving God with the [*whole heart*] *with my whole heart have I ſought thee*

thee, O let me not wander from thy Commandements, Pſal. 119. 10. I labour with all my ſtrength to walke in thy waies, and when I put forth mine owne ſtrength to the uttermoſt, then I deny all in my ſelfe, and wholly depend upon thy ſtrength, to be made victorious, againſt the many temptations I meet withall; and whilſt through thine ayd, I go in the direct way, to obtain grace, and victory againſt corruptions, let me not O Lord be fruſtrated, and ſo lie open ſtill, to be drawn aſide from thy Commandements.

Godly ſincerity makes a man obſerve the divine rule, in labouring to doe the will of God. Now the divine rule in this point, is, that we ſhould labour with *all our ſtrength, thou haſt commanded us to keepe thy precepts* [*deligently*] Pſal. 119. 4. *Thou haſt commanded us to* [*keepe*] that is, thou haſt commanded us to labour to keepe: but how to labour? lazily? no: *diligently.* מְאֹד *valde, very much, earneſtly, vehemently,* ſaith the originall; That is, with all our ſtrength. Now ſincerity is ſuch a ſpeciall worke of God upon the ſoule, that it makes a man put this precept before him, in all his labourings to doe the Will of God: and ſo he labours very much, *earneſtly, vehemently,* that is, with all his ſtrength, to doe the will of God.

That ſincerity makes a man labourious with all his might [*to doe all Gods Will*] the Scripture abundantly proveth. God himſelfe deſcribing a ſincere man to the Divell, confirmeth this. *And the Lord ſaid unto Satan, haſt thou not conſidered my ſervant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a*

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perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and eschweth evill? That is, one that eyeth all my will, and escheweth all that is contrary thereunto. That thus these words are to be interpreted, is manifested by *Jobs* owne language, when he would maintaine his sincerity to God, the searcher of all hearts. *Let me be weighed in an even ballance, that God may know mine integrity.* Why? what is thy integrity *Iob*, upon which thou dost so much stand? why 'tis this: I have laboured to obey *all Gods will. If my steps have turned out of the way, and my heart walked after mine eyes, and if* [*any blot*] *hath cleaved to my hand, &c.* Job. 31. *If I have walked with vanity, or if my foot hath hastened to deceit*; and so he goes on largely, driving things to this issue, that if he had not been laborious, to walke according to all Gods Will, he would yeeld to what his adversaries charged him with, to wit, that his heart was not sincere. So likewise the Lord explaines himselfe, in describing *Davids* integrity to *Solomon. And if thou walke before me as David thy Father, in integrity of heart, and in uprightnesse, to doe according to* [*all*] *that I have commanded thee*, 1 *Kings.* 9. 4. By this we plainly see, that sincerity sets a man to doe all that God enjoynes. Christ therefore in the new Testment, describing sincerity to the young man that thought himselfe as upright (doubtlesse) as any, *All these things have I kept from my youth*: what lacke I yet? Jesus said unto him, *If thou wilt be perfect*: that is, if thou wilt be sincere and upright indeed, in the eye of God, who is a searcher of the heart, *goe and sell all thou hast, and give to*

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the poore, and come and follow me : Part with every luſt, with covetouſneſſe thy darling ſinne, as well as with others, to which thy nature is not ſo apt, and reſigne up thy heart, to obey me in all things, ſo ſhalt thou be happy here and hereafter : ſincerity makes a man ſet all Gods will before him, as a rule to walke by, and to obey God in that part of his Will, that moſt oppoſeth that ſin, to which he is moſt inclined, as well as any other. *For all his judgements were before me ; and I did not put away his ſtatutes from me, I was upright before him, and kept my ſelfe from* [*mine iniquity*] Pſa. 18. 22. 23. *I did not put away his Statutes from me, &c.* An unſound ſoule will not take notice of ſuch a precept, as oppoſeth his ſpeciall ſinne : ſuch a precept muſt goe for a blanke, which the ſoule throws by, and will not thinke of, but as conſcience now and then puts him in minde of it, whether he will or no. But 'tis not ſo with a man in whom ſincerity is : that precept which doth moſt oppoſe that ſinne, to which he is moſt inclined, he labours to obey as well as any other. *I was upright before thee, and I kept my ſelfe from* [*mine iniquity*.] An unſound ſoule ſets ſo many of Gods ſtatutes before him, as rules to walke by, as ſuites with himſelfe and the times, and no more. Such precepts as oppoſe his ſpeciall corruptions, or diſpleaſe the times, and ſo expoſe him to ſuffering, theſe he balkes and puts away, as *David* here ſaith, and cals them as the rotten Scribes and Phariſees, were wont to doe, *Leaſt Commandements*, ſmall things not to be regarded : which rottenneſſe Chriſt tooke up roundly in thoſe ironicall words, *Whoſoever*

soever shall breake one of these least Commandements, shall be called the least in the Kingdome of God. Godly sincerity makes no difference of greatest and least, between the precepts of God, but sets all before a man as a rule to walke by, and makes the soule labourious to observe all. *Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy Commandements, Psalm.* 119. 6.

That God may have all the glory due to his Name. That sincerity makes a man to aime at the glory of God, and not at his owne glory, is manifest by that expression the Apostle useth in my Text, *not with fleshly wisdome*, that is, not declaring our owne humane parts and gifts, to aduance our owne honour and esteeme, but as the Spirit gave us utterance, so we speake in all plainenesse and sincerenesse, that so poore ignorant soules might be edified, and God glorified. Christ describing an upright man to the unsound Scribes and Pharises, describes him (I remember) by this property, *That he seeketh not his owne glory, but his glory that sent him. He that speaketh of himselfe seeketh his owne glory, but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is* [*true,*] *and no unrighteousnesse in him. Joh.* 7. 18. Christ that had no guile found in his lips, vindicated his sincerity still by this, that he sought not his owne glory in any thing he did, but the glory of him that sent him: and that man which doth thus, *he is true, and there is no unrighteousnesse in him.* That is, he is sincere, and no hypocrite as the world may falsly judge, As *Aristotle* said of a friend, that he is, *alter ego, Another* I, or *another selfe*: so may I say of a Christian, that he

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is *alter Christus*, another Christ; *as he is, so are we in this World*, saith Saint *John*. As he aimed in all things at the glory of his father; so a sincere man aimes in eating, in drinking, or whatsoever he does at the glory of God: *God forbid* (saith Saint *Paul*) *that I should glory in any thing but in Christ*. Sincerity is such a speciall worke of God upon the soule, that it makes a man give Christ all the glory, of all the good he does, and of all the good he has, and hopes for; and to appropriate nothing to himselfe but shame; *yet am I nothing*, saith *Paul*: Nothing but a sinner; nay, of all sinners the chiefe.

An upright man, *is a man after GODS owne heart*; now looke what GOD most lookes for that an upright man lookes most at, and labours most of all to helpe God unto. Now GOD lookes at his owne Honour and Glory in every thing, wherein he hath to doe with the creature, above any thing. He made all things for his glory; and upholds all things for his glory. There should never have been a stone laid in the glorious Fabricke of this World, had it not beene for Gods glory: nor not a stone should have beene left upon a stone, long ere this, but the whole World should have beene turned into his first nothing, were it not for Gods glory. This a sincere mans eyes, and answerably applies himselfe to GOD in all hee does; as an obedient Wife applies her selfe to that sweete carriage, that she knowes will most delight her Husband. When *Isaac* had discovered to *Esau*, that Venison was the most savoury

meat, which his soule desired, *Esau* applied himselfe to his father, and goes a hunting after it, that he might bring to his father what he most loved, and so obtaine his fathers blessing. Now God hath declared that his honour and glory is that savoury meat which his soule of all things most loves, and therefore all that are sincere children of God, they doe hunt and plot for this in all their waies, that they may bring God that savoury meat, which his soule most loves.

The description of sincerity being thus opened, I am in the next place to shew unto you, the grounds of this point; why we ought thus simply and sincerely, to have our conversation in this World. The grounds are these foure: First, because God commands it. Secondly, because God delights in it. Thirdly, because God hath appointed this and no other way unto all good. Lastly, because the World which lies in wickednesse, may be left without excuse. First, we ought in simplicity and godly sincerity to have our conversation in the world, because God commands it. *I am the almighty God, walke before me, and be thou perfect*; that is, *entire, sincere, Gen.* 17.1. This Commandement God gave to *Abraham*, and in him to all us. This commandement is not grievous; a Commandement that hath any injustice in it, that any should complaine or except against it, and therefore ought to be obeyed. For God made man, and can unmake him againe at his pleasure; and therefore may justly serve himselfe of him, & appoint him what rules he pleaseth to walke by. *I am God Almighty*] *walke before me, and be sincere.* I

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by my Almighty power made thee of nothing, and can quickly by this Almighty power, turn thee into worse then nothing: therefore walke thus and thus, as I command thee.

God did more by his Almighty power, then barely make man: God by his Almighty power made man upright: that is, not as uprightnesse notes sincerity, but as uprightnesse notes perfection. And therefore God might justly command us, (if he would) to walke perfectly, as Angels and Saints in Heaven doe. This Commandement therefore is not grievous, but full of mercy and moderation, that he commands us onely to walke before him, and be upright, as uprightnesse notes sincerity. Therefore seeing 'tis a Commandement ful of justice and mercy both, it ought to be obeyed; and so consequently, every one of us ought in simplicity and godly sincerity, to have our conversation in this world.

Secondly, as God commands us to be sincere, so he *delights* in it; and therefore we ought in simplicity and godly sincerity, to have our conversation in this World. *They that are of a froward heart, are an abomination to the Lord; but such as are upright in their way, are his delight*, Prov. 11. 20. Kings, as they have Officers for necessity, so they have favourites, persons of honour for communion and delight. Now the King of Kings would have no fit persons of honour for communion and delight in this world, were there no upright men in it: and therefore we ought in simplicity & godly sincerity, to have our conversation in this World. God would live solitary and alone in this world,

without any pleasure or delight in this World, were there no upright men, nor uprightnesse in it: for God hath no pleasure in wickednesse nor wicked men. *Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickednesse, Psalm.* 5. 4. The God of this World, that rules in the children of disobedience, is a God that hath pleasure in wickednesse; but the God of all the World, is not such a God; he hath pleasure onely in uprightnesse. *I know also my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightnesse,* 1 *Chro.* 29. 17. And therefore we ought to walke in uprightnesse, or else we shall deprive the King of Kings of his pleasure.

Thirdly, we ought in simplicity and godly sincerity to have our conversation in this world, because God hath appointed this and no other way to all good. *For the Lord God is a Sunne and a Shield; the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walke uprightly, Psalm.* 84. 11. If we would have the light of Gods smiling countenance, to shine upon our soules, which is ten thousand times more glorious, and reviving then the Sunne, we must walk *uprightly:* for the Lord God is a *Sunne* to such, and none else. *God is angry with the wicked every day.* saith the Prophet: and being angry with them every day, he cannot smile upon their soules, as the Sunne doth upon all creatures, but frowne and knit the brows against them. God dwels as a convincer and reprover, and not as a comforter, in the hearts of hypocrites. God feeds them soules with gall and wormwood, with bitters, not with sweets;

sweets; with *a certaine fearefull looking for of judgment, and fierie indignation*, which have not their conversation in simplicity and godly sincerity, in this world. A Hell and not a Heaven, shall men that walke not uprightly, have within their owne hearts.

If we would have protection, we must walke uprightly: for the Lord God is a *Shield* onely to such. *He that walketh righteously and speaketh uprightly, his place of defence shall be the munitions of Rocks, Isa.* 33.15. God is a consuming fire, and not a defence unto the hypocrite. In a word, if a man would have grace or glory, or any good thing else that he can name, he must walke in this way to obtain it, to wit, *in simplicity and godly sincerity*: for in no other way hath God engaged himselfe, to bestow any good upon man, but all evill. The Israelites going out on the Sabbath day to finde Manna, found nothing but a curse; and the reason, because out of Gods way, God will distribute blessings in his owne way: if we decline this way, God will inflict curses, and not blessings. Now upright walking is that way in which God hath promised to bestow all good, and none else: and therefore we ought thus to walke. 'Tis fit we should come to God, and not God to us; 'tis fit that unholy man should conforme to a holy God, and not a holy God to unholy man.

Finally, we ought *in simplicity and godly sincerity, to have our conversation in the World*, that so the world which lies in wickednesse, may be left without excuse, both in regard of their wickednesse towards God, and his children. Wicked 1.

men complain of Chriſt, that he is a hard maſter, looking to reape where he did not ſow; that this and that precept is a hard ſaying, none can obey it. And others complaine that the world is full of occaſions and provocations, that 'tis impoſſible to walke uprightly. Others, that times are ſo hard and dead, that they cannot live of their callings, if they ſhould deale juſtly, and walke uprightly. Now Chriſt will ſtop the mouths of all theſe at the great day, by ſetting before them thoſe that have lived, in the ſame ages of the world, in the ſame imployments in the world, under the ſame government of Chriſt in the world, and yet have kept themſelves unſpotted of the world, and have in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, had their converſation in the world: and then ſhall Chriſt *be cleare when he judges*, and liers mouths ſhall be ſtopt, and be like the man that wanted a wedding garment. And therefore we ought in ſimplicity and Godly ſincerity to have our converſation in the world, every one in his place, that ſo Chriſt may doe this ſervice by us againſt the wicked, at the great day.

2. Againe, that wicked men may be left without excuſe, as in regard of their wickedneſſe towards God, ſo in regard of their wickedneſſe toward Gods children. Now the wicked perſecute the godly with tongue and hand, and pretend juſt ground for their practice; that the godly are, as he falſly ſaid of the Prophet, troublers of *Iſrael* enemies to Church and ſtate. But at the great day, the ſearcher of all hearts will lay open all things according to truth; and make it plainly appeare

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to men and Angels, that they had their converſation in this world, in ſimplicity and Godly ſincerity, and ſo guiltleſſe of all that the wicked accuſed them of, and puniſh them for; and then will Chriſt be cleare when he judges theſe wretches, for condemning the generation of the juſt. Wherefore we ought to walke ſincerely & blamelesly in this world, that ſo the wicked may have no plea for their wicked proceedings againſt us, or againſt the righteous proceedings of Chriſt againſt them.

Ought we *in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, to have our converſation in the World?* Why, then let us examine our ſelves, and ſee whether we thus walke. Are ye *laborious?* that is, *conſtantly* laborious, *willingly* laborious; laborious *according to all your ſtrength*, to doe *all Gods Will*, that *he may have all the glory due to his name?* Looke backe, and call to mind, how this deſcription of ſincerity was opened, and lay open your hearts and lives by it, and ſee whether they agree not. Are yee *laborious* to doe the Will of God? Or doe yee not the *worke of the Lord negligently?* and ſo ſtand lyable to that dreadfull curſe denounced by *Jeremie?* Doe yee not reſt in bodily exerciſes which profit nothing? 'Tis the leaſt labour in the World, to bring the outward man to duties; the labour of labours is about the heart, to bring that to duties; are ye laborious about this? Are yee watchfull over your Spirits, and laborious about your inward man, that this in every thing, may goe along with the outward man to obey God? 'Twas that the Lord of old upbraided Ier. 48. 10.

his people withall, that they were laborious according to the outward man, to come to Church, and to be at all divine exercises, but they were carelesse respecting their hearts, which God most lookt at, and let this run loose after vanity. *And they come unto thee, as thy people commeth, and they sit before thee as thy people, and they heare thy words, but they will not doe them: for with their mouthes they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousnesse*, Ezek. 33. 21. God most looks at the heart, how that is entire to, or loose from himself. Are ye most laborious about that, which God most looks at? or do ye not least mind that which God lookes at most? in this consists the power of godlinesse, to be laborious about the inward man, to bring this to be obedient to the Will of God (*My sonne give me thy heart.*) Neglect this, and thou wert as good sit still, as labour at all about thy outward man, to bring that to be holy: thy labour about outside holinesse, is to God as the cutting off of a dogs necke: and God will upbraid thy labour, as he did those hypocriticall Scribes and Pharisees, who *washed the outside of the Cup and Platter*.

Possibly some of you may thinke, that you hold weight wel enough by this: That you are *laborious* according to the outward man, and according to the inward man, to doe the Will of God: but put in one weight more into the Scales & Balance of the Sanctuary, to wit, this; Are yee *constantly* laborious to doe the Will of God? Tell me which way the Scales turne now. Sincerity makes a man *constantly* laborious to doe the Will

of

of God, as you have largely heard; doe you thus labour? Or are ye not quickly weary in well-doing; so weary as to leave off the worke? Thou art watchfull over thy spirit to day; but art thou not as careleſſe about it to morrow? The godly are ſubject to wearisomneſſe, and *fainting in their minds* (as the Apoſtle intimates) in their labouring about, and watching with an unruly heart; but they are never ſo weary, as to give over the work. *David* was *wearied* often with his *groanings*, they were ſo deep, and breathed out ſo many precious Spirits; but yet as freſh ſtrength came, he kept on groaning ſtill, under the heavy burthen of a bad heart, and never left labouring about his ſpirit, to bring it to be more and more compoſed, entire, and one with God as long as hee lived. But unſound Chriſtians are quickly weary in labouring about their hearts, juſt in that ſenſe which God is ſaid to bee weary of repenting, *Jer.* 15. 6. *Thou haſt forſaken me* (ſaith the Lord) *thou are gone backward; therefore will I ſtretch out my hand againſt thee, I am weary of repenting*; that is, I will repent no more: I will forbear the execution of my threatnings no longer. So rotten hearts are wearied with repenting, ſoul-ſearching, and ſoul-watching, that they will repent no more, nor maintain inward induſtry about their ſouls no more; but judge of it upon a little triall, as that which will ſhorten their lives, or at leaſt, utterly end the felicity of their lives, and at laſt cry it downe, as an unneceſſary and unreaſonable ſervice. Is it not thus with you?

Poſſibly yet ſome of you may thinke, that you hold

hold weight well enough, by the balance of the Sanctuary. But put in one weight more, and tell me which way the ſcales turne then. Are ye *willingly and chearefully laborious*, to doe the will of God? Doe you finde any ſoule-ſweetneſſe, in your ſoule-labours? Or are they not as the diſeaſe of the ſtone, ſtrong tortures, without the leaſt tang of ſweetneſſe? is it not as death unto thee, to be ſearching, humbling, watching and obſerving thy ſpirit, a day? Doſt thou not ſhunne and avoid occaſions, as much as thou canſt, that may make thee to looke in upon thy ſpirit,, to check it in its vaine way, as that which is like the pricking of thy *right eye?* Doeſt thou not make frivolous excuſes, and needleſſe buſineſſe, to put by *Davids* opportunities, of private commerce with God and thy owne ſoul? as one that findeth no pleaſure nor profit, in this ſervice of God? Doeſt thou not wiſh that prayers were over, Sermons over, the Lords day over, that thou mighteſt be ſelling Corne, and following thy ſecular employments, and carnall ſports and delights, as thoſe wherein thou findeſt more ſoul-content, then in any divine thing? *'Tis a joy to the juſt to doe judgement*, ſaith *Solomon*. 'Tis the ſweeteſt pleaſure in the world to an upright man to be in upright, holy waies, doing uprightly to God and man. Gods word, Gods ordinances, Gods people, Gods ſervice in every part thereof, are all tranſcendently ſweet to an upright ſoul: *Sweeter then honey*, that is, ſweeter then the ſweeteſt earthly content. And the more ſpirituall, divine duties and exerciſes are, the more pleaſing and taking

king ſtill, to an upright ſoule. Duties of moſt ſeriouſneſſe and ſtrictneſſe, are of moſt ſoule-ſweetneſſe to him. Is it thus with you?

Poſſibly yet ſome of you may thinke that you hold weight well enough, by this balance of the Sanctuary. But put in one grain more, and tell me whether thou be not found too light then? Are ye laborious *according to all your ſtrength*, to doe the will of God? doe you *reach forth* and *preſſe forward*, as Saint *Paul* ſaith? that is, put out all your ſtrength to obey the will of God, this in Scripture, where ſincerity is preſſed unto, is called a ſerving of God with *all our hearts*. You take a little pains to obey the will of God? but could you not take a great deale more if you liſted? 'Twas the unſoundneſſe of the Jewes, that when they could have brought Males and legitimate ſacrifices, they brought (to ſave their purſes) maimed and deformed ſacrifices. And ſo 'twas the unſoundneſſe of *Saul*, that he could have killed *Agag* and the fat of the cattell, as well as the reſt of the Amalekites, if he would. And is it not your hypocriſie, that you could doe a great deale more to pleaſe God, then you doe, if you liſted? doe not by and ſelfe ends make you pluck in your horns, and ſuſpend your ſelves, parts and abilities from Gods ſervice? Doth not the feare of the loſſe of your liberties, livings, lives, and the like, make you ſpeake leſſe for God, and doe leſſe for God, then he hath given you ability and opportunity to doe? Doe yee not put forth your parts in the ſervice of God, in reference to the ſafety of your skin, and not in reference

rence to Gods command, which calls for all our might in his service?

If you tell me that you hold weight yet by the balance of the sanctuary, why? put in yet one grain more, and tell me whether the scales do not stand without poising either way. Are yee laborious according to all your strength, *to doe all Gods will?* according to that holy rule, *Deut.* 13. 5. *Onely if thou carefully hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to doe* [*all these Commandements*] *which I command thee this day.* You doe with *Herod*, by means of powerfull preaching and sharp affliction, reforme *many things* peradventure, but do ye labour to reform all things: To divorce your selves from your *Herodias?* To pull out right eyes, and to cut off right hands; To mortifie your *members which are upon Earth*; that is, the sins of your soules, which are as deare unto you as the members of your bodies? or doe ye not spare *Agag*, and the fat of your lusts? pleasing sins, and profitable sins? Doe you observe doctrine and discipline, matter and manner in the worship and service of God?

You pray, but doe yee pray *fervently?* You pray, but doe ye *watch and pray?* You heare the word of God, but do ye *take heed how ye heare?* You receive the Sacrament, but doe ye *examine your selves and so eate?* You goe to the house of God about holy duties, but *doe ye looke to your feet*, when you approach so neer unto God? You give to the poore, but doe you give chearefully? you give, but doe you give liberally? You know the Scripture calls for manner as well as mat-

matter: manner is all in all with God. And sincerity is such a speciall worke of God upon the soul, that it makes a man laborious to do every divine thing exactly, according to that divine manner which God in his word prescribes. 'Tis not thus with an hypocrite: he is led by customes; and makes it a matter of conscience not to swerve from these, how incongruous soever to the word of God; or else he is fearefully given over to a careless spirit, to doe divine things, as hits, he cares not how; any way, or no way, all is one. Or else, he is desperately pinned to his owne will being wiser in his owne eyes then ten men that give a reason. Thus and thus he will walke, say all the world what they will: is it not thus with you?

If you tell me, that yet you hold out weight by the balance of the sanctuary, I am glad; yet possibly you may be one graine too light. Are ye laborious to doe all Gods will, *that God may have all the glory due to his name?* Doe ye not sacrifice to your own nets, and take the glory to your selves of your labours like *Herod?* When men applaud you, is not this to you, as the rubbing of a Parrat upon the head, very pleasing, and that which makes you hug your selves within your own thoughts: *Is not this great Babel which I have built?* Could such a thing have been done, if I had not done it? Or could any man have done it so well as I? Looke in upon your spirits before, but especially after divine duties, and see whether you doe not seeke your selves in them, more then the glory of Christ. Doe ye not give almes to be accounted liberall men, and that the

poore

poore may applaud you for good men, and good house-keepers? Doe ye not *blow a trumpet, when you give almes?* that is, so distribute your charity, as may be most advantagious to your owne repute in the world? Do ye not let your left hand know still what your right hand doth? are ye not dampt in your designes of charity and bounty, when 'tis to go forth in such a way, as if it were *cast upon waters*, or into the bottom of a well, where no eye can see, nor no tongue speak of your good works, nor no likelyhood of the least return? Do ye not looke for much observance from such to whom you doe much? And repent of your kindnesse, when men doe not answer it in thankfulnesse? Doe ye eye Christs command, and out of love to him, give upon all just occasions as unto him? Are those that are religious tendred and succoured by you in their bonds and miseries, *as if you were bound with them*, according to the divine rule?

Doe ye not in prayer, more looke at words and expressions, then to your spirits? Doe yee not *pray in the market places?* That is, so pray that others may observe you, and blaze abroad that you are very devout persons? Are ye not industrious to pray well (as you call it) in publike, and careless and pursunctory, when you pray in private? Are ye not more constant a great deale, in the performance of publique, then in the performance of private prayers, where there is no observer nor applauder but God, which sees and hears in secret? Doe yee not after prayer, hug your owne gifts, and admire your apt expressions, dexterity

dexterity of utterance; and to think much, that you have no more thankes given you for your pains; and that those that joyned with you, were no more affected? Doe yee not pin your spirits to your owne acute studied formes, and prayers in print, *boasting of things made ready to your hand* (as the Apostle speakes) and scoffe at the *spirit of grace and supplication? Zech.* 12. 10.

Doe ye not preach your selves and not Christ; and more looke at words then matter; to please men, then please God? Doe ye labour to approve your selves to every mans conscience, or to every mans fancie? Doe ye not put plaine truths into abstruse termes, a new coat upon old divinity, and strive to scar in dry Metaphysicall strains, above your owne and others apprehension? Doe ye not *build hay and stubble* upon the true foundation? the opinions of Fathers and Schoolmen, and the tenents of proud time-servers, whom God hath given over to a *Spirit of delusion to believe lies, because they received not the truth in the love of it?* Doe ye aime at conviction, conversion, or ostentation in your preaching? Doth it not almost make you sicke like *Ahab*, that your elaborate Sermons in places of eminent note, have not yet brought you to a fat living? Do ye not preach *Christ out of envy*, as the Apostle speakes, to bring about your wicked designes, and to vend your malitious spirits against the godly? Doe yee not wrest the word of Christ, to confirme your time-serving tenents, and to maintain your voluptuous loytering life? And if so:

so: is this *in simplicity and Godly sincerity to have your conversation in the world?*

To you that by what hath beene said, see, that you are yet unsound at heart, that you do not in simplicity and godly sincerity order your conversation in this world, I have three things to say: Labour to be affected with your unsoundnesse: Then judge your selves that you may never be judged of the Lord: And then beg the cure of your soule disease.

First, labour to be affected with your unsoundnesse. This is the killing mischief of hypocrisie, that it is hard and difficult, throughly to bee found out and truly to be bewailed. Hypocrisie is *vitium latens, vitium transfigurans, vitium adulans, & vitium obdurans*: a hidden, a transforming, a
1. flattering, and a hardning vice. 'Tis a hidden vice. *The heart is deceiptfull and desperately wicked, who can [know it]* (saith the Prophet) *The spirit of a man may know the things of a man*, but deceit and guile, this lurks and skulks in such hidden corners of the heart, that the spirit of man does not know it. And hence it is, that multitudes think themselves very sincere, which yet are very unsound. A man may discerne drunkennesse, swearing, and whoring in himselfe, and yet all this while, be utterly unable to see the hypocrisie of his spirit: and hence 'tis, that you shall have drunkards, swearers, and whore-masters to confesse these vices, and yet plead for the goodnesse of their hearts and meanings too.

2. When the unsoundnesse of the heart is discovered by the word and Spirit of God, then hypo-

crisie

crisie becomes *vitium transfigurans*, a transforming vice. The heart strives now, to put faire glosses upon foule matters; to put a beautifull vizard upon the ugly face of sinne; and to appeare in the eye of a wakened Conscience, quite of another colour; or at least nothing so ugly as the Word of God would make it to be.

3. If this will not stop the mouth of complaining Conscience, then it becomes *vitium adulans*, a flattering vice. The heart tells conscience now, that it is true, things are bad, but God is very good: hee is not *extreame to marke what is done amisse*; a thousand worse persons have found mercy, and are gone to Heaven, and therefore thou needst not so much trouble thy selfe, O my soule. *Hee that beleeves makes not hast*; it is time enough yet, to amend all that is amisse, and to bee as good as the best.

4. All this while that it is a *hidden vice*, *a transforming vice*, *a flattering vice*, 'tis *a hardening vice*. All the while hypocrisie lyes hid, and after it is discovered, and shifts and flatters, it insensibly hardens; so that whilst *deceiving*, the soule is miserably deceived, and then becomes *past feeling*, Conscience being *seared with an hot iron*: that is, God utterly leaving Conscience, to doe any office any longer for him, in checking such a shifting shuffling sinner in his sinfull way. And when this worke is done upon any soule, you may leave tolling, and ring out; for hee is dead & gone for ever.

Now becauſe hypocriſie is of ſuch a ſhuffling ſubtile nature as this, 'tis very hard for a man to become truely ſenſible of it, and throughly affected with it: and therefore I exhort you which are convinced by what was formerly delivered, of your ſoundneſſe, firſt to labour to be truely ſenſible of it, and deepely affected with it. 'Tis a vice, that of all vices, puts you into the furtheſt unlikeneſſe to God, and the neereſt likeneſſe to the Devil. It puts you into the furtheſt diſſimilitude to God, of all vices: for God is *moſt upright*, ſaith *Iſaiah*. *Thou* [*moſt upright*] *doeſt weigh the path of the juſt*, *Iſaiah* 26. 7. God is *moſt upright*, and an hypocrite of all men leaſt upright: and therefore, an hypocrite of all men, is leaſt like God, and yet moſt like the Devil; of whom I may ſay, as the Lord of the Leviathan, *He is King*, ſaith God, *of all the children of pride*: So is the Devil King of all the children of hypocriſie. As 'tis ſaid of God, that he is *moſt upright*; ſo it may be ſaid of the Devil, that hee is moſt guileful; an arch-hypocrite: and therefore guileful perſons are moſt like the Devil; and the more guileful, the more like: and hence is *Elymas*, who was *ful of all ſubtilty*, by way of eminency, called The *childe of the Devill* by Saint *Paul*, who knew wel how aptly to ſtile hypocrites.

'Tis a vice that turnes a man into a Devil, and God into fury fiercer then the Devil: for the Devil is but Gods creature, and therefore though his fury bee unexpreſſible by us, yet it is finite in it ſelfe; but Gods fury againſt hypocrites

crites is infinite; and therefore you shall finde him spending a whole Chapter, in breathing out woes against hypocrites; and therefore hell as the most suitable place, and the greatest torments in Hell, as the most suitable thing to an infinite fury, is reserved as a peculiar portion for hypocrites. Were infiniteneſſe communicable, and by a finite creature ſuſceptible, no leſſe then infinite fury, ſhould hypocrites burne in-

When thou haſt by ſuch conſiderations as theſe, brought thy ſpirit to be truely affected with thy unſoundneſſe, then judge thy ſelfe for it, that thou mayſt not bee judged of the Lord. Judge thy ſelfe as one moſt injurious to Chriſt and his glory, of all men. Judge thy ſelfe as a Traitor to the King of Kings: as one that haſt craftily conſpired with the Devill and thine owne heart, to keepe out Chriſt from ruling and reigning in thee: as one that haſt ſubtilly betrayed the honour of God, in every action thou haſt performed, ſeeking thy ſelfe under pretence of ſeeking him. Judge thy ſelfe as a cheater, that haſt beene cunning to deceive the godly, and thine owne poore ſoule. Judge thy ſelfe as a ſelfe-ſoule-murtherer, that haſt craftily baffled thine owne Conſcience, that Gods Word might not convert and turne thee from thine ungodly courſe, and ſo ſave thy precious ſoule. Judge thy ſelfe as a *Judas*, that kiſſeſt Chriſt, boweſt and cringeſt to Chriſt, and yet betrayeſt and crucifieſt Chriſt. In a word, judge thy ſelfe as a right hand of the Devill, by which hee hath done a great deale of miſchiefe: Judge thy ſelfe as a

capital offender, as a ſinner of all ſinners the chiefe; and then beg pardon.

And intreate God to cure the foule diſeaſe of thy heart. Tell him how long this diſeaſe hath been upon thee; and what a loathſome creature it hath made thee; and what a prime vitall part it is faſtened upon; and how neere periſhing thou art; and how it is paſt the cure of all other Phyſitians and Surgeons; and that there is but one way with thee ſpeedily, if thou haſt not remedie forthwith from him; and that thou haſt nothing of thine own, to ſatisfie him for the cure of it: but haſt a friend, Chriſt, that will pay all. Remember this, to begge him, who *faſhioneth all mens hearts alike*, to mend thy bad heart with a new one, according to his promiſe. Onely a new heart is an upright heart; and this God hath promiſed to give, and this thou muſt urge, and believe, and wait: and this way ſhalt thou be healed, helped, and ſaved.

To you which upon examination finde, that you doe *in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, order your converſation in this world*, I have onely this to ſay, you doe no more then you ought, and therefore there is no place for boaſting. 'Tis our beauty in Gods eye, to be vile in our owne eyes, what ever our parts and endeavours be. Thy uprightneſſe of integrity, comes farre ſhort of that uprightneſſe of perfection, in which thou waſt created: and therefore when thou haſt done all that thou canſt, yet *ſay that thou art an unprofitable ſervant*; a man that comes far ſhort of what thou ſhouldſt be, and of what once thou waſt.

But

But that which I would rather ſtand on a little, is this; Thou that walkeſt ſincerely, doſt no more then thou oughteſt, and therefore goe on. The Apoſtles exhortation to the *Hebrewes*, ſhall be mine to you: *Looke diligently leſt any man faile of the grace of God, leſt any roote of bitterneſſe ſpringing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.* Heb. 12. 15. Wee have that within us, and that without us, which will corrupt our ſimplicity, and turne us aſide from our ſincere converſation, if we doe not watch over our ſelves. Where ſimplicity is, hypocriſie is not wholly extirpated; ſome remainders of this foule evill are in the beſt heart; and theſe roots of bitterneſſe, if you bee not ſtill labouring to grup up, they will quickly overgrow ſincerity, and all good in the heart. 1.

And as wee have that within us, which will quickely ſeduce us from that ſimplicity which is in Chriſt; ſo we have that without us too, which will doe the like, if wee be not very watchfull, to wit, the Devill and his children. The Devill is an arch-Apoſtate himſelfe, and hee labours might & main, to make all the ſonnes of men, to fall from grace and goodneſſe as hee hath done; that ſo every one may bee as neere like himſelfe in ſinne and miſery, as may bee. *He goes about like a roaring Lyon, ſeeking whom hee may devovre* (ſaith the Apoſtle.) A thouſand wiles hath the Devill to corrupt our ſimplicity; and hee is more laborious about this, then about any deſigne againſt the ſoule of man. The Devill is not ſo laborious, to make a breach upon a mans faith or patience, or the like, as upon a mans ſincerity: becauſe hee

knowes

knowes that every breach made upon this, is a stabbe to the heart, which will kill the soule for ever, if God do not admirably cure it. If labour will accomplish this designe, the Devill will not neglect that: *hee goes about seeking whom he may devoure.* If terrours and affrightments will accomplish this designe, the Devil *will roare like a Lyon*, against a mans soule, as if he would teare him to pieces, and suddainely throw him into that bottomlesse pit, without all redemption. If flattery will be more prevalent then terrour, to bring about this designe, the Devil will *transforme himselfe into an Angell of light*, and promise us *all the Kingdomes of the World*, to winde us about to him.

And as the Devill is laborious about this designe, so hee hath many apostate children, such as have *lost that good that they seemed to have*, and these, as their father, being more like their father, then any of all his children beside, labour tooth and naile, not onely passively by example, but actively by promises and threatnings, especially in these last dayes, to turne aside soules from simplicity in doctrine and manners; and by their devillish craft have turned away many; so that many have made shipwrack of faith and a good conscience, and are gone in the way of *Balaam* the sonne of *Bosor* that arch-hypocrite, studying and labouring to mischiefe Gods people, for preferments and honours in the world; *speaking lyes in hypocrisie, having their consciences seared with an hot iron.* And therefore tis but needfull and seasonable, that I exhort you to looke

to

to your ſpirits, and take heed of theſe bitter roots that yee bee not defiled by them. Remember what God ſaith by the Prophet *Ezekiel*, *When the righteous man turneth away from his righteouſneſſe which hee hath done, and committeth iniquity, all the righteouſneſſe which hee hath done, ſhall not bee mentioned, but in his treſpaſſe which hee hath treſpaſſed, and in his ſin which he hath ſinned, in that ſhall hee dye*, Ezek. 18.24. And if once you waxe weary of well doing, and decline ſincere walking, all thy former integrity ſhall not ſo much as once be mentioned to thy comfort, but to thy terrour often ſhall it be by way of upbraiding, mentioned to thy conſcience here, and to the aggravation of thy condemnation hereafter, as one that haſt taſted of the powers of the Word to come, of the ſweeteneſſe of the ſpirit of grace, and yet after this, haſt grieved, oppoſed, and done deſpight againſt it.

Having therefore put your hand to the plough, looke not backe: having begun in the Spirit, doe not end in the fleſh: having begunne to order your converſation ſincerely and uprightly, ſo continue unto the death, what ever you undergoe in life. All afflictions for righteouſneſſe ſake, ſhall be tolerable, comfortable, and at laſt augment your Crowne. They ſhall bee tolerable when at height: for no tryall ſhall bee above your ſtrength: *God is faithfull by whom you are tempted, who will with the temptation ſhew away to eſcape.*

They ſhall not onely bee tolerable, but they ſhall bee alſo comfortable, when at the very

height. *For as the afflictions of Christ abound in you, so shall your consolations abound by Christ* (as the Apostle saith.) The pre-reception of bitters, makes sweets the sweeter.

3. Finally, they shall be profitable, to augment your Crowne of glory in the life to come: *Blessed are ye when persecuted for righteousnesse sake, for great shall be your reward in heaven* (saith Christ.) And this reward shall come quickly, which addes to the worth and excellency of it: *Behold, I come quickely, and my reward is with me, wherefore hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy Crowne*, Revel. 3. 11.

The second Sermon.

2 Cor. 1. 12.

For our rejoycing is this, the [*testimonie of our conscience*] *that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisedome, but by the grace of God, wee have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.*

THe second proposition, now in order to be handled, is this, *That conscience can give testimonie, concerning the simplicity or hypocrisie, of a mans conversation. Pauls* conscience gave testimony with him, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, hee had behaved himselfe in preaching and living, in life and doctrine, as a faithfull Minister of Christ ought to doe.

do. So likewise his conscience bore witnesse with him, concerning his sincere and holy desires, towards his brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh. *I say the truth in Christ, I lye not, my conscience also bearing me witnesse in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heavinesse, and continuall sorrow in my heart; for I could wish my selfe were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, Rom.9.1.* *Jobs* Conscience also gave testimony concerning his integrity. *Let me be weighed in an even ballance, that God may know mine integrity.* By this, and many such like expressions of his, 'tis most plaine, that his Conscience could give testimony concerning his conversation, what it was, whether good or bad. *Davids* Conscience did the like. *Thou, O Lord, shalt judge the people: judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousnesse, and according to mine integrity that is in me.* A large induction of particulars to this purpose, might easily be made, but I rather take another way to confirme this point.

The truth of this point (I conceive) will be better confirmed and opened, by setting before you what Conscience is; and then you will plainly see what Conscience can doe, and doth doe, in the soule of man. Conscience is better felt then defined, for ought that I can yet finde, among the learned. *Conscience is a part of the understanding in all reasonable creatures, determining of their particular actions, either with them or against them,* say some. *Conscience is a reflection of the soule upon it selfe,* say others. *Conscience* (say I) *is a naturall power which the soule of man hath, above all unreasonable*

sonable creatures, to compare his wayes by some rule, and according as his wayes agree or disagree with that rule, so answerably to beare witnesse with or against him.

First, conscience [say I] is a *naturall power, &c.* My meaning is, conscience is an ability, wherewith God endowed the soule of man by creation, as with other gifts and abilities, for his comfort, if he walked well; for his terrour, if he walked ill. We may not imagine, that conscience came not into the World, untill after *Adams* fall: this were to suppose *Adam* in Paradise, to be a man without conscience. Conscience indeed as an Accuser and condemner, came not into the world, untill after *Adams* fall; but Conscience is an Accuser, Acquitter, and Comforter, was in *Adam* before his fall. As long as *Adam* obeyed the Commandement of God, there was no cause that Conscience should accuse him, but as soone as hee disobeyed Gods Commandement, conscience flew in his face, as appeares by his flying from the face of God. Which plainely shewes us this truth, that conscience was in *Adam* before his fall, but did not begin to accuse, till *Adam* began to sin.

Secondly, Conscience (say I) is a naturall power [*which the soule of man hath, &c.* Now whether this power be in the understanding onely, or partly in the understanding and partly in the will, I finde controverted amonst the learned. My opinion, I here humbly lay down, but I undertake not to state and determine the controversie. This power we speake of, I conceive to be a reflect act of the practicke understanding onely, transcendsntly

dently seconded by the power of the Holy Ghost. Saint *John* confirmes the first, that it is a reflect act of the practicke understanding onely, where speaking of this power in the soule, saith, *And hereby we doe know, that we know him, if we keep his Commandements*, 1 *John* 2.3. That is, as if *John* had said, We doe view our wayes by the word of God, (which is an act onely of the understanding) and finding them to be in some measure levell with that holy rule, wee have this comfortable reflection backe upon our soules, that our faith is not a fancie, but a faith which worketh by love, and so sincere and saving: which reflection, is no other, as I conceive, but an act of the understanding, collecting a divine conclusion from divine premises. He that keepeth Gods Commandements, knoweth God savingly; that he may safely conclude: but I doe keepe the Commandements of God, this I know, for I have viewed the Commandements of God, and my life by them: and therefore I know, that is, I am assured that I truely and savingly know God: which is no other, but that power in the soule which we call conscience.

The Apostle Saint *Paul* (I conceive) confirmes the second, that it is a reflect act of the understanding, *transcendently seconded by the Holy Ghost*, where he saith, *My conscience bearing mee witnesse [in the Holy Ghost.] Rom* 9. 1. That is, my conscience transcendently seconded and assisted, by the Holy Ghost, doth strongly testifie to my soule that I am full of bowels towards my kinsmen after the flesh, and could doe any thing, or suffer any thing for their good. The order according

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to which the Holy Ghost strikes in with Conscience, is this. The understanding makes a double proposition, one grounded in the Word of God, the other in the heart of man: as thus, Hee that keepeth the Commandements of God, truely loves God; this proposition is grounded in the Word of God; But I doe keep the Commandements of God; this is grounded in the heart of man; And then drawes a conclusion from both; therefore I doe truly love God. This conclusion whilst holy, and drawn from divine premisses, to wit, the Word of God, and the grace of God in the heart of man; the Spirit of God strikes in with the soule, in making this conclusion, and assists the weake soule, so that he concludes thus with *strong confidence*, that he truely loves God: and not onely secretly assists, but seconds, and saies the same thing to man, that his owne spirit doth. Then is fulfilled that of the Apostle, *the Spirit beares witnesse with our spirits, that wee are the Sonnes of God.* If the premisses be corrupt, which the understanding makes, (for the minde makes propositions suitable to the light that is in it, from which to argue the goodnesse or badnesse of man) then the Divell that lying spirit, strikes in and seconds the soule, in that corrupt conclusion which he collects from corrupt principles, concerning himselfe: So that now the deluded soule is peremptory, and wiser then ten men that give a reason; in these is fulfilled that of the Apostle, *Their mindes and consciences being defiled.*

Thirdly, I affirme Conscience to bee a naturall power, which the soule of man hath [*above all unrea-*

reasonable creatures, &c.] Brute beasts have no conscience: and yet they better serve God in their kind, then many of us which have conscience. Brute beasts want reason, and therefore are not capable subjects of conscience; and yet against reason and against conscience, man oft times does worse then a beast.

Fourthly, conscience (say I) is a naturall power which the soule of man hath above all unreasonable creatures [*to compare his wayes by some rule; and according as his wayes agree or disagree with that rule, so answerably to beare witnesse with, or against him.*] By the former part of this description, is shewed unto us, what conscience is according to its being in the soule: *It is a naturall power, &c.* By the latter part of this description, is shewed unto us, what conscience is according to its office in the soule.

The office of conscience, according to the description here given, consists in two things. First, conscience *compares a mans wayes by some rule.* Secondly, conscience *beares witnesse with or against a man, according as a mans wayes agree or disagree with that rule.* First, say I, *conscience compares a mans wayes by some rule.* If the understanding bee enlightned with the truth, to wit, the word of God; then conscience compares the wayes of man by a perfect rule, to wit, the word of God. But if the understanding bee enlightned with naturall and moral principles onely, then Conscience compares a mans wayes according to these principles onely, and so by an imperfect rule. For 'tis my judgement, with submission to better, that con-

conscience in every man follwoes that light which the understanding holds up unto it. This I know, that a man may, and often doth goe against conscience: but conscience goes not against that light which the understanding holds up unto it. A man may outwardly say this or that, contrary to the light of his understanding, but conscience inwardly speakes at the same time, according to that light. I will further cleare this unto you, by an apt example. *Paul* you know zealously persecuted the Church of God, and his conscience (for ought that I can finde) never checkt him, but doubtlesse, rather acquitted him for it; I meane as long as he remained unconverted. And the reason I thinke, is sufficiently rendered, where 'tis said, that he *did it ignorantly*. That is, according to that light which his understanding held up unto him, he thought he did God good service, in shedding the blood of his Saints, which methinkes makes manifest what I say, that conscience still follows the light of the understanding.

The Apostle *Paul* persecuted the Church of God, and yet obtained mercy, because (saith the Text) *he did it ignorantly*: hee did out of conscience (as I may say) shed the blood of the Saints. But now the most men have received the knowledge of the trueth; and therefore if now men persecute the Saints of God, either in heart, tongue, or hand, they goe against knowledge, and so consequently against conscience; for conscience followes the light of the understanding, and so comes neere the committing of the unpardonable sin, to the committers of which God hath said,

ſaid, there ſhal be no mercy ſhewed, either in this world, or in the world to come.

Here I would have you obſerve this, for the further clearing of what hath beene ſaid, *That the Word of God is the rule, by which conſcience compares the wayes of men, ſo far forth as the underſtanding is enlightned by the Word of God, and no further.* So farre forth as the underſtanding is ignorant of the Word of God, ſo farre forth conſcience is ſilent. As long as Saint *Paul* knew not luſt to bee a ſinne, conſcience never accuſed him for luſt as a ſinne. And this ſurely is one reaſon why many ſhun the preaching of the Word of God, and the ſtudy thereof, leſt by *encreaſing knowledge, they ſhould encreaſe griefe*, as *Solomon* ſaith: leſt by this meanes they ſhould come to the knowledge of their ſinnes, and ſo conſcience pul them by the throat for them. Of ſuch as theſe the Apoſtle Saint *Peter* ſpeakes, where he ſaith, *Of this they are willingly ignorant, that by the Word of God the Heavens were of old, and the Earth, and the World that then was periſhed*, 2 *Pet.* 3. 3, 4, 5. That is, they did purpoſely do as much as in them lay, to put out that light which was in their underſtandings, which told them that hee which at firſt made the Heavens by his Word, and did by his word deſtroy them with water, would one day againe deſtroy them with Fire and Brimſtone: this they did labour to keep themſelves ignorant of, that ſo they might without check of conſcience goe on in their ſins.

To ſuch as theſe, I may truely ſay with the Apoſtle, *If our Goſpel be hid, it is hid unto thoſe which periſh, in whom the God of this World hath blinded the*

the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospell of Jesus Christ, who is the Image of God, should shine unto them, 2 *Cor.* 4. 3. 4. He that keepes himselfe in ignorance, that his Conscience may let him goe on quietly in wickednesse, loves to goe to Hell without controll. Thou that canst not endure, that thy Conscience should reprove thee secretly, 'tis no wonder that thou canst not endure, that thy Minister should reprove thee publikely. Thou that canst not endure that thy Conscience should reprove thee for sin now, must endure whether thou wilt or no, Conscience to torment thee for thy sin hereafter.

The second thing that I would have you to observe is this, *That conscience doth compare all a mans wayes with the rule of the Word, so far-forth as the understanding is enlightened with the Word.* All that light which the understanding hath received from the Word of God, Conscience takes it and makes it a rule, by which he measures all a mans wayes, thoughts, words, and deeds, to try what agreement or disagreement there is betweene them and the rule.

That Conscience compares the thoughts of men by the Word of God, so farre-forth as the understanding is enlightned by the Word, as well as words and deeds, is manifest by the language of the Apostle, where he speakes of the Gentiles on this wise. *Which shew the worke of the Law written in their hearts, their consciences also bearing witnesse, and their* [*thoughts*] *the meane while accusing or excusing one another*, *Rom.* 2. 15. Divine light so farforth as it shines into the hearts of heathens, con-

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science makes use of it as a rule, by which to examine their very thoughts, and so answerably to accuse or excuse them, as their thoughts are found to agree or disagree with the rule. S. *Paul* likewise confirms this truth. *I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing me witnesse in the holy Ghost; that I have great heavinesse and continuall sorrow in my heart, for I could wish my selfe separate from Christ, for my kinsfolke in the flesh:* Saint *Paul* here tels us that his conscience did beare him witnesse, that his thoughts and desires were thus and thus sincere, respecting his brethren; which conscience wil never doe, before he hath levelled a mans thoughts and desires by the word of God, and found them to be so: by consequence then it is manifest, that conscience compares a mans thoughts by the rule, as well as his words & deeds. Rom. 9.

Conscience keeps Court in the heart, and therefore can and doth observe our thoughts, as wel as our words and deeds. Conscience keepes a Court of justice in the heart, and sits upon the life and death of the soule, which is ten thousand times more precious then the body; and therefore will not sift this and that, and let other things goe, which the word condemnes, as well, and as plainly, as it doth any thing else. The word of God you know cõdemns evil thoughts as wel as evil words, and not onely grosse evil thoughts, as thoughts of murther, adultery, and the like, but *vaine idle thoughts*; and therefore conscience can do no lesse, as Gods Vice-gerent in this lower circuit but examine these, as well as words and deeds, by the rule of Gods word, to see how farre they agree to

or disagree from it. Which work when conscience hath exactly done, then it *beares witnesse with or against a man, answerably as a mans waies agree or disagree with this rule*: which is the last clause in the description of conscience, and comes now according to order and method to be a little opened.

Conscience when he hath compared a mans waies by the rule, and exactly found out how they agree with, or agree from it; the next thing he doth, is, he beares witnesse with, or against a man. This clause I adde, in the description of conscience; because 'tis a divine power placed in the soule of man, to be as it were a Judge betweene God and man. Conscience takes notice of things together with God, and compares them by the rule together with God, and then pronounceth sentence with or against man, for God. First I say, conscience takes notice of things together with God: and hence it is, say the learned, that this power in the soule is called Conscience. *Scire* (say they) is said of him which knowes one thing alone, so as none else knowes it with him. *Conscire* is said of three or foure, which know some secret together. *Conscience* therefore, must needs signifie a combination of two at the least, in the knowledge of some secret thing. Now this combination cannot be between man and man; for man doth not know the secrets of my heart, no farther then as I reveale them to him: this combination neither cannot be betweene man and Angels, for they doe not know the secrets of my heart together with my selfe.

selfe. This combination must then needs be, between God & man. God knows all our thoughts, *There cannot be a thought hid from thee*, saith *Iob* of God. And he knowes all our words and deeds: *all things are naked before him, with whom we have to doe.* And man also by a gift from God knowes together with God, his thoughts, words, and deeds; and compares them by the rule together with God; and then beares witnesse with or against himselfe to God: and this gift we therefore call Conscience. Iob. 42.2.

Here note this, *That conscience beares witnesse with or against a man, no farther then his waies agree or disagree with the word of God.* There can be no bribing of conscience, to speake better or worse of any man to God, then his waies deserve. Conscience beareth witnesse against a man, when having compared the waies of man by the word of God, he findes them to disagree from it. But here possibly some of you may say, Doth any mans Conscience beare witnesse against himselfe: against his owne Land-lord, in whose house he dwels? To this I answer, yes. The Apostle confirmes this, where he saith, *If our hearts condemn us, God is greater then our hearts, and knoweth all things,* 1 *Iohn.* 3. 20. *If our hearts condemn us, &c.* Conscience will give testimony and sentence against the very wombe that beares him, if wicked; and so far-forth as he knowes it to be wicked. Conscience cannot now give an exact testimony, nor an exact sentence against a sinner, because the understanding holds not up unto it an exact light: *We know but in part,* though God *know all things;*

and knowing but in part, conſcience yet can doe his Office but in part; but what he does is faithfull and righteous, according to the light which the underſtanding holds up unto him. But hereafter when we ſhal all appeare before the judgement ſeat of Chriſt, Chriſt wil by his Almighty power ſet up a glorious light in every mans underſtanding, ſo that they ſhal know all things done in the body, whether good or evill, as compleatly as Chriſt himſelfe, and then conſcience will ſpeake as plain and as broad as Chriſt himſelfe: and hence 'tis that men ſhal ſtand ſilent before the Judge of all the world.

The teſtimony which conſcience gives againſt a man now, is very audible: ſo audible that it cauſeth the merrieſt heart, in the midſt of laughter to be ſad. It will make the ſtouteſt ſinner ſtoope his heart to ake and ſhake within him, and his countenance to gather blackneſſe. But at the great day, it will make every ſinner in *Belſhazzars* caſe, and worſe, when he ſaw the hand-writing on the wall. It will make ſinners at their wits end; to *wiſh for Mountaines to fall upon them and cover them*, or diſpatch them utterly.

Conſcience beares witneſſe with a man, when having compared his waies by the rule, he findes that they agree therewith: So audible and ſo ſenſible is the teſtimony, that conſcience gives now with a man, that it makes him to rejoyce in the midſt of all outward troubles and hardſhips: *For our rejoycing is this*, (ſaith *Paul* and *Timothy* in the midſt of all their outward troubles) *the teſtimony of our conſcience; that in ſimplicity and godly ſince-*

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rity, not with fleshly wisdome, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world. Conscience spake so loud, and so plain, and so comfortable, in giving testimony with them, concerning their integrity, that they understood well what he said, and were more comforted by this stil testimony within, then if hundreds without had given testimony with them to their adversaries, and said they were upright men. But much more audible and comfortable will the testimony of conscience with a man be, at the great day: but I let that alone till then.

At present I hope you see enough, by this description of conscience, to confirme the truth in hand, to wit, *That conscience can give testimony, concerning the simplicity or hypocrisie of a mans conversation.* Now the reasons why God hath given unto conscience this power, are these: First, that man might have something within him, to comfort or terrifie him, when all things without faile. Secondly, that Gods proceedings with man, may be by man confessed to be just. Lastly, that God at the great day may dispatch a great deale of weighty businesse speedily.

First, God hath given this power to conscience, to give testimony concerning the simplicity or hypocrisie of mans conversation, that so man might have something within him, to comfort or terrifie him, when all things without him faile. If a man walke sincerely, conscience will be a comfort to him, when father, mother, husband, wife, wealth, and all friends faile him. And this comfort will be a continuall feast, in famine, con-

tinuall honour, in disgrace; continuall wealth, in poverty; continual liberty, in bonds; continuall peace, in warre; continuall health, in sickneſſe; continuall eaſe, under every burden. This was meate to eate, to *Paul* and *Timothy*, which the world knew not of. Nay, this was transcendent conſolation in the midſt of troubles to *Paul* and *Timothy*, which the believing Corinthians dreamt not of: and therefore 'tis, that they thus wrote to them, *Our rejoycing is this, the teſtimony of our conſcience, that we have ſincerely ordered our converſation in the world.* As if they had ſaid thus, Though we have loſt many comforts, yet we have not loſt all; we have ſomething within us, which is a continuall comfort to us, in the midſt of all the ſorrowes and miſeries, which we meet withall: and that is, the peace of a good conſcience. And if man walke not ſincerely, conſcience is by divine appointment, to be an accuſer, condemner, and in part an executioner of torture upon the delinquent, in this life. This worme ſhall gnaw within, when things are carried ſmooth without. This dog ſhall bite and teare within, when all are afraid to barke without. This blood-hound ſhall dog the ſinner; let him goe with *Cain* into the Land of *Nod*, into what place he will, or to what imployment he will: ſo that proud man ſhal feele ſomething within, for his wickedneſſe, when he feeles nothing without.

Secondly, God hath given this power co conſcience to give teſtimony concerning the ſimplicity or unſoundneſſe of mans converſation; That ſo all Gods proceedings with man, both here and here-

hereafter, may be confessed to be just. *One witnesse, said God, shall not testifie against any person, to cause him to die, Deut.* 35. 30. Two witnesses God accounted sufficient, to vindicate every act of justice amongst men: but under two, God would not allow judicature against any man; that so judgement might be cleare, the Judge confessed to be righteous, and the malefactour silent. God the great Judge of all the world, keeps himselfe to this rule, in his proceedings of judicature against man. Two witnesses will God have, against every malefactour, to wit, Christ and conscience. God doth immediately see all things done by man, and is a witnesse himselfe, to all that he commits in the body, as we guesse by his owne words. *Because they have committed villany in Israel, and have committed adultery with their neighbours wives, and have spoken lying words in my Name, which I have not commanded them, even* [*I know*] *and am a witnesse saith the Lord. Ier.* 29. 23. By this we see, that God the Father sees our sinnes, and is a witnesse: but because he will not be a witnesse in his owne cause, he will have two sufficient witnesses besides himselfe, to wit, Christ, and conscience: both very true.

The devill would willingly be a witnesse against man, as an evill spirit that knowes much by man, but does not know so much as the spirit of man, which is in him: and therefore not a sufficient witnesse. But if that evill spirit did know as much by man as mans owne evil spirit which is in him, yet being corrupt, he would prove a false witnesse against man: a Knight of the Post and

sweate any thing against man, to bring a great misery upon him, as is upon himselfe, if he might be admitted for a witnesse, such is his diveliſh hatred and malice to all beings better then his owne; but therefore God will not admit of him as a witnesse, for, or against a man. Two true witnesses will God have, one without a man, and another within him; one in Heaven, and another in Earth; to wit, Christ and Conscience: *Behold, I have given him for a witnesse to the people*, saith God the Father of Christ, *Isa.* 55. 4. And this witnesse is in Heaven, saith *Job*; *Behold my witnesse is in Heaven*, *Iob.* 16. 19. Not so in Heaven, that he is not also in earth; or as if he were ignorant of any thing done in Earth, for then he could not be a sufficient witnesse; *Iob* speaks of Christ, according to his speciall place of residence, and that is in Heaven: but Christ hath a Country house here below in our hearts, where he hath one abiding continually, that is equall to himselfe, that tels him all, to wit, his spirit: so that Christ is as competent a witnesse as conscience, that sits as register still in the heart, and never stirs out of his place.

These two witnesses doe, as that man was commanded to doe which had a sheepe committed to his trust, and the sheepe torne in pieces by wilde beasts; he was to bring some of that which was left; some horne or hoose, or any part else that was left, for a witnesse of the truth thereof, *Exod.* 22. 13. Thus Christ and Conscience bring before God and the soule those precepts which were by God committed to man, to be kept, and which he

he hath ſuffered his unruly heart to breake to pieces: my meaning is, ſo lively do theſe two witneſſes ſet before the ſinner, the breach of every precept, according to every circumſtance, as ever any party under the Law, could ſet before the owner, the tearing in pieces of his cattell, by the limbs and pieces thereof. And this being done, divine ſentence is given, and the ſoule muſt needs bee ſilent, being ſo legally handled; and Angels and Saints be forced to break forth and ſay, *Righteous art thou, O God, in all thy waies, and holy in all thy works.*

Laſtly, God hath given this power to conſcience, to give teſtimony concerning mans ſimplicity or hypocriſie, that ſo *God at the great day may diſpatch a great deale of weighty buſineſſe ſpeedily. And I will come neere to you to judgement, and I will be* [*a ſwift witneſſe*] *againſt the ſorcerers, and againſt the adulterers and falſe ſwearers*, ſaith the Lord, *Mal.* 3. 5. What the Lord then ſpake reſpecting a particular judgement, the ſame will be Gods proceeding with all at the great day. The books ſhall be opened; Chriſts booke, and the booke of Conſcience; and ſo in a *moment*, in the *twinkling of an eye*; that is very ſpeedily, all things ſhall be clear to Judge and malefactor, without troubling Juries, and other witneſſes, as we doe here, which would make a long worke, at that great aſſize; and all perſons bee judged and ſent to their place; and ſo righteouſly judged, that not one ſhall open his mouth to complain. Now this could not poſſibly be a worke ſpeedily done, if God had not given this power to Conſcience.

ſcience, to reflect and give teſtimony, and to be in ſtead of, and better then a thouſand witneſſes beſide, and all debating *pro* and *con*, between them.

The wiſdom of God is here to be admired: for he hath made ſuch a witneſſe to give teſtimony with Chriſt for, or againſt a man, every way ſo fit, that nothing in the world can be judged ſo fit. Chriſt wee muſt all confeſſe to be very fit, to be Gods Delegate; becauſe he came out of the boſome of God, and knowes exactly all his Lawes, which he hath given man to obſerve, which Angels doe not, and man is a party, and therefore both unfit. But the holy Ghoſt cannot be judged fit to be mans Delegate, becauſe one with the Father and Sonne, and ſo a party in the cauſe. And as for Angels, they know not neither the propoſed rule exactly, nor the aberrations of the Delinquent; and as for men, they are parties in the cauſe, and ſo would juggle together, and ſweare one for another: or at leaſt as one fleſh and bone, with fooliſh pity ſpoyle a City (as we ſay) that is, they would ſpeake flattering and halting, and ſo over-turne juſtice at laſt, after a great deale of doe with them. Now to prevent all this danger, toile, and ſtirre; God hath created ſuch a power within man as to obſerve all things done by man; and no leſſe one with man, then Chriſt is with the Father; and therefore as inexceptible a Delegate for man, on the one ſides as Chriſt is for God on the other ſide. And theſe two of an inſtant, without all diſturbance, diſtraction, or turmoile, give in exact evidence concerning mans integrity or hypocriſie; and ſo ſpeedily without

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all clamour, sentence, and execution, and all is finished; and the Judge of all the world does more weighty businesse in a moment, and far better then all the Judges in this world could doe in the age of the world.

Having thus given you the point, and the grounds of it; let us see in the next place, how usefull this may be unto us all. Hath God given power to Conscience, to give testimony concerning the simplicitie or hypocrisie of mans waies? Why then let us all take heed, how we order our conversation in this world. Give leave to your souls to thinke nothing, speak nothing, nor doe nothing, but what you would have written down, and delivered in to the Judge of all the world at the great day. When wee know a tale-teller is neer us, we are very carefull what we say or doe. Why? wee have alwaies a tell truth in our bosoms, where ever we goe, or whatsoever we doe; who will tell all to the Judge of all the world, that we think, speak, or doe: and therefore let us watch over our thoughts, words, and deeds, and so think, and so speak, and so doe, as those that looke to have the comfortable testimony of conscience with them, at the great day of account; *That in simplicity and godly sincerity, we have had our conversation in the world.* Under the old Covenant, God had a *Tabernacle of witnesse*, which was the inner Court where the Arke was, in which the Law was, to give testimony against the Israelites when they did evill. So God hath now under the new covenant, *a Tabernacle of witnesse*; and this is the inner Court, to wit, the heart, where Consci-

Conscience is, to give testimony against us when we transgresse. And therefore let us set a watch upon our hearts, and tongues, and hands, and intreat God with *David*, *to hold up our goings in his paths, that our footsteps slip not*, Psal. 17.5.

I note this, because I see multitudes live as if there were neither Conscience, nor God, nor Devill, Heaven nor Hell. The speech of the Prophet of old, may I fitly here make use of. Men were then so audaciously wicked, that the very shew of *their countenance did testifie against them; they declared their sinnes as Sodom, and hid them not; Woe unto their soule* (saith God) *they have rewarded evil unto themselves*, Isa. 3.9. Thus may I say of multitudes amongst us now, the very shew of their countenance doth testifie against them. The wanton eye, the fiery eye, the drowsie walling eye, the burly malmsey nose, the painted face, antick postures, gestures and fashions, do all as *Iobs* wrinkles in his face, testifie against thousands, that they little lay to heart this doctrine, *That Conscience can speak and tell all their doings to God*, Proud *Hamans*, time-serving *Doegs*, drunken *Nabals*, whorish *Iesabels*, scoffing *Ishmaels*, declare their sins as *Sodome*, and hide them not; and as for Conscience, turne him off with a glasse of sack, and a play-house.

But let me say to these wretches, with the Prophet, *Woe unto their souls, for they have rewarded evill unto themselves*. You have made a long, black, bloody bill, for Conscience to open against you, the last day of this Terme, to wit, at death; which shall be tryed the first day of the next Terme.

Terme, to wit, as soon as you are out of the body: and then will Conscience give testimony, so strongly against you, that if you would give ten thousand rivers of oyle, nay, if you would give the fruit of your body for the sin of your soul, it it shall do no good; the cause shall goe against you, and sentence shall be past upon you: and then shall you know by wofull experience, the meaning of that place, *Rom.* 2. 5. *But after thy hardnesse and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thy selfe wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgement of God.*

Wherefore three things I would give in counsell to you all: seeing Conscience can give testimony concerning the simplicity or hypocrisie of mans waies; suspend him not; sleight not his language; but give diligent attention to what he saith. Let us not stop the mouth of Conscience, seeing he can speake, and tell us what we are. Many there are that labour to stop the mouth of Conscience, when he tels them plainly of their sins, and to destroy that divine power which Conscience hath, to speak in them, and to them. The Apostle *Peter* gives us a hint of these, where he saith, *Scoffers shall come in the last time, and shall say, Where is the promise of his comming.* For this (saith he) they are *willingly ignorant of, that by the word of God, the Heavens were of old,* 2 *Pet.* 3. 5. When Conscience told those scoffers, that would live in their sins, and scoffed at the day of Judgement, saying, Where is the promise of his comming; that God made the world by his Word, and drowned it quickly by his Word, when

when it was overspread with wilfull wickednesse; and therefore you have like cause, to look for like swift misery, for as much as you are so wilfully and desperately wicked. This sharpe and plaine language of Conscience, they could not indure, and therefore willingly laboured to darken this divine light, and to silence this faithfull House-Chaplain. Thus it is with many sinners now; Conscience now and then, delivers stinging language to their souls, for such and such sinnes, and then they set to lift this faithfull Monitor out of his place; and because they cannot possibly doe this, being so immediately inducted by God, they strive to gag his mouth, and kill him; by running wilfully into wickednesse, against all checks and reproofs of Conscience, and friends, as men desperately resigning up their souls to the Devil, because God will not humour, and satisfie them in their owne waies: and so shipwrack Faith, Conscience, Soule, and all for ever. That which oft-times followes upon this, is selfe-stabbing, selfe-drowning, selfe-hanging, selfe-poysoning, and the like.

This is crying wickednesse, and incurable wickednesse. 'Tis crying wickednesse to strive to gag and kill Conscience. 'Tis *Dei-cidium*, to murther God. Conscience is no other but Gods Vicegerent in the soul; or rather, Gods judiciary presence in the soule. So far forth therefore as a man wilfully doth injury to this, he doth commit high Treason against the King of Heaven. 'Tis to stab the Judge of all the World as hee sits upon the Bench, speaking Law and Justice, which very

very nature abhorres, as desperately deviliſh.

And 'tis incurable wickedneſſe: for 'tis to deſtroy the firſt *medium* of converſion, by which the holy Ghoſt works in man, to gag and kill Conſcience. The firſt thing that the Spirit of God doth when hee comes to convert a ſinner, is to convince his Conſcience, and to make that ſting him for his ſinnes, and then ſtir him up to long after, and to ſeek for Chriſt; and then gives faith in Chriſt, and ſo ſaves the ſinner. Now he that ſtrives to ſilence Conſcience, undermines his own ſalvation, in the very foundation and firſt ſtone thereof: He doth wilfully and wickedly prevent his owne ſoule of all the good that God doth in this way to bring ſinners home to himſelf. Thou doeſt little conſider, O deſperate wretch, what great wickedneſſe thou committeſt, that ſtriveſt to gag and kill Conſcience. Thou committeſt double murther, in a ſpirituall ſenſe; which is murder of the higheſt kinde: thou doeſt murder God and thine owne ſoule. And therefore I beſeech you all to take heed of this practiſe. Seeing God hath given Conſcience ability and parts to ſpeak, let him ſpeak freely, though he ſpeake never ſo ſharply and plainly, and doe not check him.

Nay doe not ſleight him: which is the next thing I would a little preſſe upon you. A man that can ſpeak, and ſpeak to good purpoſe, though he be an enemy, we ſo far honour him, as to let him ſpeake out fully what he hath to ſay, and not turn away the eare from him: give but this honour to Conſcience. Many deale with Conſci- 2.

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science. Many deale with Conscience, as *Felix* did with *Paul*; he willingly heard *Paul* a while, concerning the faith of Christ, but when he came to reason of uprightnesse, temperance, and judgement to come, he set *Felix* into a trembling; and then saith he to *Paul*, *Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will send for thee*, Acts. 24. 25. So many will heare Conscience, whilst he gives testimony with them, of this good thing, and that, which they have done, and it may be whilst he tels them of lesser faults, but when once hee comes to reason throughly with them about their sins, which are as dear as right eyes, and right hands unto them, and threatens them home *with judgement to come*: when he tels them of that righteousnesse and temperance which the word commands, how much they have neglected it, and what they are liable to for it, and so sets their souls into a cold shaking sweat, then they have enough of Conscience, and they turn their ears and minds to some other matters; and send Conscience away, till they be at better leasure: this is no other, but to sleight Conscience in his place.

God will make no other of this, but contempt of his prime Court of Justice here below, and those that sit chiefe there, as for him: and thou wilt finde no other, but a great deal of secret soul-mischief by this. God hath no other Court here below, but the heart of man; and no Judge in this Court, but Conscience: and Conscience being Gods chiefe Judge; wilt thou hearken to him when thou pleasest; and when thou pleasest,

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turne the deafe eare to him, say what hee will? Doest thou thinke that God sweares Judges for this lower circuit, which know not Law, nor how to speak upon the bench worth the hearing? Doest thou think thy self too great to bee arraigned by God? and to answer to such interrogatories, as hee shall put unto thee?

As God will make no other but contempt of this, so thou wilt finde no other but a great deale of secret soul-mischiefe by this. To sleight the voyce of Conscience, is the ready way to bring the soule into security and presumption, which are unsensible damning evils. When there was no King in *Israel*, nor Royall Courts of Judicature, every man did what was right in his owne eyes. So when this Royall Court of Conscience is sleighted, the soule will grow fearlesse and careless, and man will give leave to himself, to think, and speak, and doe as he listeth, and yet *promise peace to himself, though hee live in the wickednesse of his own heart*; then which, what can bee a greater soul-evil?

Wherefore honour God, in his Royall way of Judicature: and seeing hee hath appointed an able Judge in thy Soule, of thy wayes; sleight him not, but *diligently hearken to what hee saith*; which is the last thing I would a little presse upon you. Conscience can speake better of thy wayes then any man can doe: therefore give him leave to speake, and diligently observe all his words, and tell mee what hee saith to thee. Doth hee not tell thee, that thou art a drunkard, an adulterer, a swearer, a prophaner of the Lords Day,

an unjust dealer, a selfe-seeker, a time-server, a man that ordereſt thy devotion and converſation ſuitable to the times, a man that makeſt thine own ends thy ayme, in all thy actions? Doth he not tell thee that thou art an idle perſon, a buſie-body, a railer, a ſcoffer, and malicious perſon? Or what is it that Conſcience ſaith unto thee? For hee ſpeakes to no man elſe but to thy ſelfe, ſo faithfull and diſcreet is hee; and therefore I can enquire of none but of thy ſelfe, O ſinner, what Conſcience ſayes unto thee. Conſcience can give teſtimonie with or againſt thee; prethee hearken to him, and tell me what hee ſaith. When Chriſt was arraigned, and ſtood ſtill and ſaid nothing, the high Prieſt aroſe (ſaith the Text) and ſaid unto him, *Anſwereſt thou nothing? What is it which theſe witneſſe againſt thee? Matth.* 26. 62. So ſay I to you, Conſcience doth arraigne you now and then, and he doth give teſtimony; what teſtimony is it that he gives? Is it againſt you, or with you?

If againſt you: what is it that hee accuſes you of, and condemnes you for? Doth he condemn thee for the vanity of thy thoughts, for the levity of thy words and deeds? Doth he condemne thee for the pride of thine heart, or for the pride of thine heart and life both? Doth hee condemne thee for the ſhedding of innocent blood? for ſcoffing and perſecuting the wayes of God? Doth hee condemne thee for hugging ſome ſecret ſinne, which the word diſallows? or for thy ſuperficiall perfunctory pietie? Whatſoever Conſcience accuſes and condemnes thee for, honour

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this Vice-Roy so farre, as to weigh thorowly what he saith; and call to minde thy wayes, and consider whether they have not been, so as Conscience saith: and if so, then compare what Conscience saith of thy course, with the Word of God; and if Conscience within, and the Word of God without agree in one, in what they say against thy course; doe thou strike in with thy Conscience and the Word of God, and say of thy selfe and wayes, as they say, and joyne with them in judging and condemning thy selfe and thy courses.

And then beg the Lord that hee will not strike in and judge thee too; for if hee judge thee too, then thou art gone for ever. Tell him, that though thou hast sinned, yet Christ hath dyed; and here hold. And then beg him to cleanse and cure thy wicked heart, that thou maist goe, and sinne no more lest a worse thing befall thee: namely, to be delivered from the hands of a condemning Conscience, into the hands of a condemning God, who *will teare thee in pieces, and there will be none to deliver.*

If Conscience give testimonie with you, that you are *pure and upright*, as he useth the expression to *Job, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, you have had your conversation in the world*; why then? weigh your wayes by the Word of God, and see whether the Word of God saith the same of your wayes which Conscience doth: if so, why then doe you strike in too, and say as Conscience and Gods Word doe, and so own Gods great work of grace in your hearts, in making them upright, and

think that thou canst never declare love enough to God, which hath declared so much love to thee, as to make thee a man after his own heart, to bee a companion for his owne Son and Selfe, in grace and glory.

The third Sermon.

2 Cor. 1. 12.

For our rejoycing is this, the [testimonie of our conscience] that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisedome, but by the grace of God, wee have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-wards.

HE third proposition, which now according to order and method, comes to be handled, is this, *That consciousnesse to our selves, of the simplicity and sincerity of our conversation, will yeeld us joy in the midst of troubles.* *Pauls* and *Timothies* Conscience giving testimony with them, concerning the simplicity and sincerity of their conversation, made them to rejoyce in the midst of all the troubles they underwent. *For our rejoycing is this, the testimony of our Conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, wee have had our conversation in the world.* I thinke the Psalmist points at this Truth too, where hee saith, *Unto the upright there ariseth light [in the darknesse], &c. Psal.* 112. 4. By *the darknesse*, I conceive hee meanes troubles and injuries from

from wicked men, which because they are more vehement then many other troubles are, *The mercies of the wicked being cruelties*, the Psalmist elsewhere calls them, The sorrows of Hell, as here he cals them κατ' ἐξοχὴν, *the darknes*: now in this darkenesse, though *the darkneße*, that is very sharp misery, yet there ariseth *light in it*; by light I conceive is here meant comfort and joy from Conscience, giving testimony concerning their uprightnesse, as attended with the Spirit of *glory and of God*, as *Peter* cals the holy Spirit of consolation. If you conceive not this Scripture plain enough, to consent with my Text, read *Davids* language in the seventh *Psal.* 10,11. *My defence is of God, which saveth the upright in heart.* God judgeth the righteous; and God is angry with the wicked every day. As if *David* had said, This is my comfort in the midst of all the troubles and fears I am in, that my Conscience tels mee, my conversation in the world hath been led according to the dictate of an upright heart, no way injurious to these sonnes of *Beliall*, which labour to bee every way injurious to mee; and therefore I am sure that God, which is alwayes a defence unto the upright, will bee a defence unto mee: God considers the wayes of the upright, and smiles upon their soules to their great consolation, when the world frowns, this I finde by experience; but rotten wretches God is continually angry with, and this hee will first or last (I am sure) make them to know with a witnesse. *Solomon* likewise consents to this as a truth; to wit, That the testimony of Conscience concerning the simplicity of mans conversation, will yeeld him joy

in the midſt of troubles, as wee may collect from his language, *Prov.*15.23. *A man hath joy* (ſaith he) *by the anſwer of his mouth.* When a man upon every occaſion ſpeaks ſincerely, conſcience within cheers and comforts a man whatſoever follows upon plain dealing to the outward man. 'Tis me thinkes as if *Solomon* had ſaid, Let a man ſpeake ſincerely upon all occaſions, and he ſhall be ſure to find his conſcience comfort him in the midſt of all troubles that may follow upon it.

Troubles are either naturall, or accidentall. Naturall troubles I call ſuch as men are born unto by reaſon of ſinne. By the fall of *Adam*, *man is borne to troubles as the ſparkes flie upward*, *Job* 5. 7. to troubles in body, in ſoule, in husband, in wife, in Children, in ſervants, in kindred, in friends, in ſubſtance, in all things that are given man for his good. To the juſt as well as unjuſt, come troubles in all theſe; onely here is the difference, conſciouſneſſe of ſimplicity and ſincerity ſweetens all thoſe to the godly, whereas the wicked muſt ſwallow them in their full bitterneſſe. That Conſcience, which tells a man that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity hee hath had his converſation in the world, will alſo tell him, that all troubles in the fleſh, ſhall worke together for the good of his Spirit; and that God will give ſtrength to beare them, and a ſeaſonable deliverance out of them; and this ſweetens theſe bitters. That conſcience, which tels a man, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, hee hath ordered his converſation in the world, will tell him alſo, that 'tis a wiſe and gracious Father that doth thus, and thus

thus afflict him; yea, Conscience now and then shewes the soule the bright beames of Gods smiling countenance, that he may see that 'tis indeed a reconciled Father which doth afflict; and this like *Jonathans* honey revives much, and fetches life in swooning fits, under great troubles. That conscience which told *Job* that hee was sincere, told him also in the midst of all his troubles, that his Redeemer lived, and hee should see him with his fleshly eyes: moreover it told him, that when God had tryed him, *that hee should come forth as gold.* This sugered his bitter potion, and sweetened every bitter drug he tooke. The like may bee said of *David*; his Conscience told him that hee was upright; and this, Conscience told him also, that God was his God; *Thou art my God, and I will prayse thee: thou art my God, and I will exalt thee,* Psalm 118.28. and that God would *light his candle, and enlighten his darknesse**: that is, turne all his sorrows into joy, and his troubles into advantages; and this made every burthen easie. Thus we see, that conscionsnesse to our selves of the simplicity of our course, yeelds comfort in all troubles for sins sake, which I call naturall troubles. *Psal. 18. 28.

Troubles caused by Religion and religious walking, which I call accidentall troubles, because by accident not of its proper nature, Religion exasperates wicked men against us, these I conceive my Text principally points at; and as for all these, though the fiercest kinde of troubles, and therefore called by *David, The sorrowes of hell,* yet if a Christian hath but the voice of con-

ſcience with him, that hee hath walked ſimply and ſincerely in the world, this will keep his head above water, though theſe waves bee never ſo tempeſtuous: this will make a man ſing in a dungeon at midnight, as *Paul* and *Silas* did: this will make a man ſmile in fiery flames, as many of the Martyrs did: this will make a man alwayes rejoyce in the midſt of all ſorrows: *As ſorrowfull, yet alwayes rejoycing*, 2 Corinth. 6. 10. Sorrowfull alwayes were the Apoſtles of Chriſt, ſuch hard uſage they alwayes met withall from the world, for the Goſpels ſake; and yet in the midſt of all, joyfull, becauſe of that ſweet peace which their Conſciences ſpoke unto them, that they were not ſuch as the world judged them to bee, but were ſimple and ſincere in life and doctrine; and ſo this Scripture ſounds the ſame in ſenſe and ſubſtance with my Text: *For our rejoycing is this, the teſtimony of our Conſcience, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, not with fleſhly wiſdome, but by the grace of God wee have had our converſation in the world.*

You have ſeene now, in what troubles the teſtimony of Conſcience, concerning a mans ſimplicity, will rejoyce a Chriſtian. I will in the next place ſhew you, what rejoycing it is that the teſtimony of Conſcience will yeeld a man in trouble. Joy is either ſenſuall or ſpirituall. Senſuall joy is a meere and naked joy in the creature, ſo far as it pleaſeth the ſenſes. Of this joy ſpeakes *Solomon*, where hee ſaith: That *hee with-held his heart from no joy*, Eccleſ. 2. 10. That is, any thing

thing that might delight any ſenſe, hee got to him: hee had *men ſingers and women ſingers, and all the delights of the ſonnes of men.* Thus to order a mans converſation, is to live ſenſually and not ſincerely; and therefore Conſcience gives teſtimony againſt this man, and not with him; and ſo conſequently checks and curbs this joy, and not cauſeth it: Conſcience dampes this mirth much, by griping the ſpirit now and then, in the midſt of laughter.

Spirituall joy, is the ſoules rejoycing in God, as reconciled in Chriſt.

Spirituall joy, is the Soules] *rejoycing in God, &c.* Divine joy is therefore called ſpirituall, becauſe the ſubject of it is a ſpirit, and the object of it is a ſpirit, and all the manifeſtations of it ſpirituall. The ſubject of divine joy, is the ſpirit of man. Divine joy doth not take onely the eare, or the eye, or the taſte, or the ſmell, as carnall joy doth, but the heart: *Let the heart of them rejoyce, that ſeek the Lord,* Pſal. 105. 3. The heart is broken for ſinne, and this is made to rejoyce in Gods mercy, as a pardoner of ſinne: the ſame bones which are broken, are made to rejoyce. *Make me to heare joy and gladneſſe, that the bones which thou haſt broken may rejoyce,* Pſal. 51. 8. *Davids* heart was ſo overcharged with ſorrow, that his bones were ready to breake in his body, and in this hee deſired ſome divine refreſhing, that ſo all things out of order might bee quieted and compoſed againe. As ſorrow is no ſorrow, unleſſe it take the heart; ſo joy is no joy, unleſſe it warme the ſpirit. And therefore ſaith *David, My ſoule ſhall be*

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joyfull in the Lord, [*it*] *ſhall rejoyce in his ſalvation,* *Pſal.* 35. 9.

God doth honour that in man with joy, with which man honours him by obedience; now, the ſoule of the upright obeyes God. *My ſoule hath kept thy Teſtimonies, and I love them exceedingly,* Pſalm 119. 167. and therefore God made *Davids* ſoule to rejoyce, *I delight to doe thy will, O God, yea thy Law is within my heart,* Pſal. 40. 8. The Law of God was within *Davids* heart, and therefore the joy of God was within his heart too. Hypocrites doe not with their ſoules keepe Gods teſtimonies; their righteouſneſſe is like *Ephraims,* an outſide righteouſneſſe that vaniſheth, and ſo anſwerably God giveth them an outſide ſuperficiall joy, that ſoone vaniſheth and periſheth. They doe not ſet their hearts aright to obey God, as *David* uſeth the expreſſion, *Pſal.* 78. 8. and therefore God doth not tune and ſet their joy aright, ſo that it jarres at the beſt; their ſpirits and their faces are not alwayes merry together; *in the midſt of laughter their hearts gripe them.*

Divine joy takes the ſpirit of man *wholly,* and oft-times *immediately.* Divine joy takes the ſpirit of man wholly when at loweſt. A dram, a ſparkle, the leaſt meaſure of divine joy that can bee thought of, revives and makes glad the whole Spirit of man, as a drop of ſtrong Water warmes the whole heart. Hence 'tis, that *David* when hee had but a drop of divine joy diſtilled into his heart (as 'tis but a drop of this heavenly liquor, that our weake giddy ſoules can beare, whilſt here below) preſently hee breakes out as a man warmed all over:

I will praysе thee, O Lord, with my whole heare: I will ſhew forth all thy marvellous workes, Pſal. 9. 1. The like phraſe you ſhall finde *David* often ſpeaking in. *David* found his whole heart warmed by thoſe ſparkles of divine joy, which God ſtrooke in his darke dolorous heart, and this fetcht life in him ſtill, when ready to faint and ſwoon, and then all hee returned to God againe which he gave him; God warmed his whole heart with joy, and hee returned his whole heart to God in thankeſgiving. Divine joy warmes all that is within, and all that is without, ſoule and body, and ſets both at worke to praiſe God. *Praiſe the Lord, O my ſoule, and all that is within me praiſe his holy Name*, Pſal. 103. 1. All that was within *David*, was warmed with divine joy, and therefore all that was within him, he would have ſhould return thanks and praiſe unto the Lord. Elſewhere he cals upon all without him. *And my ſoule ſhall be joyfull in the Lord, it ſhall rejoyce in his ſalvation*: this is for all within him: then in the next verſe, ſaith he, *All my bones ſhall ſay, Lord who is like unto thee?* Pſal. 35. 9, 10. Divine joy warmes all that is within a man, and all that is without: it warms ſpirit, fleſh, and bones; the whole man, and ſets all on fire to praiſe the Lord.

As divine joy takes the Spirit *wholly*, ſo it oft times ſeiſes upon the Spirit *immediately*; breaking forth in the heart as lightning, without any certaine known *medium*, by which to come into the ſoule. *David* doth darkely hint this, where hee ſaith, *Reioyce the ſoule of thy ſervant, for unto thee O Lord doe I lift up my ſoule*, Pſalm 86. 4. Thou needeſt

needest not this to speak in, or that creature to worke by, to revive a drooping spirit, as if the Psalmist had said, thou canst put joy and gladnesse into the sad soule of man, by thine owne immediate worke, as well as if forty Ministers were imployed: this I beleeve, that none without thee can rejoyce mee, but thou without any other canst do it; and therefore unto thee do I lift up my soul. Sometimes God doth worke by secondary meanes and inferiour instruments, to rejoyce the soules of mourning sinners, as *David* would have comforted *Hanun* by his messengers: at other times, hee will make use of none but his own Spirit, to bear witnesse with our spirits that wee are the Sons of God, and walk before him as obedient children, and so rejoyces the soules of his people in troubles. Thus did God rejoyce the soule of *Paul* and *Timothy*, in their troubles and sorrows: by the Almighty worke of his Spirit, hee assured their spirits, that they were his, and that their waies were pleasing to him; which made them thus to speak, in the midst of miseries, *Our rejoycing is this, the testimony of our Conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdome, but by the grace of God, wee have had our conversation in the world, &c.*

Secondly, divine joy is called *spirituall*, because the object of it is a spirit. The object of divine joy is God, who is a Spirit, saith *John*. Divine joy hath God for its immediate object, and all other good things as beames of this Sunne, as streames from this fountaine, as mediate objects comming from, and relating to God. God alone is the ob-

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ject of divine joy. Most true 'tis, that God hath alwayes in his right hand heaven; and in his left hand earth, to wit, all the kingdoms of this world, to bestow upon whom hee will; but had hee neither, or would hee part with neither, to any beside himselfe, but keepe all in his own hand, yet an upright man would joy in him, and desire no better object to let out his affections upon. *Although the Fig-tree shall not blossome, neither shall fruite be in the Vines, the labour of the Olives shall faile, and the field shall yeeld no meat, the Flocke shall bee cut off from the Folds, and there bee no Herd in the Stalles, yet I will rejoyce in the Lord; I will joy in the God of my salvation*, saith the Prophet, *Hab.*3.17,18. *Habakkuk* will rise in judgement against a thousand thousand soules, which would never judge God worthy to bee lookt after, much lesse delighted in, if hee had not Corne and Wine, Heaven and Earth to bestow upon his favourites. This Text I conceive is a plaine testimony, that God alone is the object of divine joy: that is, not God as very wealthy, and very bountifull, but as very holy, and an absolute compleate being, above all things beside him. This was *Pauls* joy, to wit, in God alone, as hee whom his Conscience told him, hee served sincerely, though weakly.

Upright men eye the Divine rule in their rejoycing, as well as in all other things. Now the Divine rule of joy, is, that it should bee bounded and terminated in God. *Rejoyce in the Lord yee righteous*, *Psal.*97.12. This rule is repeated again and againe in Scripture, to note how apt wee are to rejoyce in creatures, and sinnes which are worse

worse then any creatures, and not in God: as also to note, how strictly God lookes at this, that wee should onely make him the object of our joy, and all other good things as beames of the Sun, as blessings from his hand; and so consequently to rejoyce still, as long as wee have communion with God, and our Consciences witnessing with us that we sincerely serve him, though we have nothing else in the world beside him, as *Paul* and *Timothy* did. *For our rejoycing is this, the testimony of our Conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdome, but by the grace of God, wee have had our conversation in the world, &c.*

Thirdly, divine joy is called *spirituall*, because all the manifestations of it are spirituall. They that have this joy in their hearts, doe not let their tongues sing ribaldry and vanity, such as flesh and blood delights in, but they *sing in the wayes of the Lord*, *Psal.*138.5. That is, they rejoyce in divine things, to be thinking and speaking of, and walking in the wayes of the Lord. 'Twas *Pauls* and *Timothies* matter of joy, that they could walke sincerely in the wayes of the Lord, and this they humbly gloried in. Such as have the joy of the Lord in their hearts, their tongues speake, and sing in such a manner, that God is extolled and magnified, according to one attribute or another, which is *making melody to God*, as the Apostle terms it. As here in my Text, the Apostle so expressed divine joy, that the power and goodnesse of the Lord were magnified, that he could and would give internal comfort, to those that did sincerely, though weakely, serve him, when all external

comforts failed. Divine joy doth not, as carnal joy, transport men into drunkards, whore-masters, wantons, libertines, and so turne them out of the waies of the Lord; but raises their spirits to a higher pitch of love to God, and so makes them walke more strictly and cheerefully *in the wayes of God*. Divine joy makes a man rejoyce and worke righteousnesse, and not rejoyce and worke wickednesse. *Thou meetest him that rejoyceth and worketh righteousnesse, Isa.* 64. 5. *Paul* and *Timothy* thus rejoyced, that they could worke righteousnesse, that they could order their conversation sincerely, though by many handled injuriously. *For our rejoycing is this, the testimony of our conscience; that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisedome, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, &c.*

Divine joy is the soules rejoycing in God [*as reconciled in Christ.*] 2. Divine joy, as man upon earth is the subject of it, hath God in Christ for its object: that is, God as reconciled in Christ; for otherwise God is an enemy, and no man rejoyceth in an enemie. *And not onely so, but wee also rejoyce in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement, Rom.* 5. 11. Wee cannot joy immediately in God, as *Adam* could, because our sinne in *Adam*, which made God angry with us: we must now have some to interpose between God and us, in whom is made up, what is wanting in us, and so Gods anger against us appeased: and therefore 'tis, that the Apostle thus speakes in the person of the godly, *We joy in God* [*through*] *our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom*

wee have received the atonement. This is sweetely set forth also unto us, under metaphoricall termes by the Prophet *Isaiah. I will greatly rejoyce in the Lord, my soul shall bee joyfull in my God, for hee hath cloathed mee with the garments of Salvation, hee hath covered mee with the robe of righteousnesse, as a Bridegroome decketh himselfe with Ornaments, and as a Bride adorneth her selfe with Jewels, Isai. 61. 10.* God as cloathing us with the Garments of Salvation, and covering us with a Robe of Righteousnesse, is the object of joy to fallen man; and thus wee know, he doth in Christ. God freely reveales an infinite love to man in Christ, and this begets love to him, and joy in him. He washeth away all our sinnes in Christs blood, covers all our wants with Christs righteousnesse, subjects his Sonne to suffer what wee had deserved, and to merit for us, all that from which wee were justly excluded, to wit, communion with God, and eternall life. This love God sheds abroad in the heart of man, and this makes man love God and joy in him. God out of Christ, is no other but a condemner of man: Conscience so apprehending God, is no other but a tormenter of man: and man between both these is in no other but hell: and there is no joy in hell. God in Christ reconciles man to himself, and then God joyes in man, and man in God. The blood of Christ makes peace betweene God and man, and betweene man and his Conscience; and makes God acquit, and Conscience acquit: God to speak peace, though man bee not perfect; Conscience to speake peace, though man walke weakly, yet whilst sincerely; and this makes divine

joy

joy in the heart, in the midst of all troubles, natural or accidentall. *For our rejoycing is this, the testimony of our Conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdome, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, &c.*

You have had a briefe hint now, by what hath been said, what that joy is, which the testimony of Conscience brings to the soule, to wit, *a conciliatory joy*, as I may fitly call it. A joy of peace and friendship, between God and man, and between man and himselfe, to wit, Conscience. Conscience tels that man which walkes sincerely, that he for his part is at peace with him; and that God is the like, though men and divels be at variance with him; and that he shall have favours spirituall and temporall here, and eternally hereafter, say and doe all his enemies what they can; and this makes the heart of man leap within him, in the midst of troubles, as the babe in *Elizabeths* wombe, when she heard the salutation of *Mary*. *Our rejoycing is this, the testimony of our Conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdome, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the World.*

Having shewed you in what troubles, the testimony of Conscience will give joy; and what joy 'tis that Conscience causeth in the soule, I will in the next place shew you the ground of the point, why the testimony of Conscience, concerning a mans simplicity, must needs cause joy in the midst of troubles. This testimony of conscience is attended with a *glorious power*, as the Apostle cals it, κατὰ τὸ κράτος τῆς δόξης *according to the glori-*

our power of him, saith the originall, that is, of the holy Ghost, which makes the testimony so strong, and so transcendently comfortable, that troubles and sorrows for sincerity sake, though never so great, cannot possibly over-beare the heart. *Strengthned with all might according to* [*his glorious power*] *unto all patience and long-suffering, with joyfullnesse*, 1 *Cor.* 11. There is a *glorious power*, attending the testimony of Conscience extended to upright soules, in times of great troubles for uprightnesse sake, which strengthens them *with all might*, so that all burdens cannot depresse them; *unto all patience and long-suffering*, so that they will never be weary, and out of breath with bearing; and to do all this with *joyfullnesse*, so that no outward hardship can utterly exhaust joy out of their spirits. Now, the testimony of conscience concerning our simplicity and sincerity, being attended with this *glorious power* in times of trouble, as *Peter* saith, 'tis *the spirit of glory and of God rests upon such*, it must needs keepe up the dolorous spirit of man, and make him rejoyce in the greatest troubles. *Paul* and *Timothy* doubtlesse found this glorious power, attending the testimony of their Conscience, strengthning them with all might unto all patience and long suffering with joyfulnesse, which made them thus to say, *For our rejoycing is this, the testimony of our Conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisedome, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.*

Secondly, the testimony of Conscience concerning mans simplicity and sincerity, must needs re-

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joyce a man, in the midst of all troubles, because Conscience now minds a man, that he walks in the midst of all enemies and troubles, just as Christ did. There was no guile found in Christs mouth, though he was put to it againe and againe: Whatever he underwent from his Father, from the divell, and his children, yet still he walked sincerely, and faultered not in the least kind, for the greatest advantage, though he was proffered all the Kingdomes in the world, to doe it. Now, when Conscience tels a man, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, he hath had his conversation in the World, it doth at once tell him that he hath walked in this World, just as Christ did. As he was, so art thou in this world, O my soule; which cannot but rejoyce the heart, in the midst of the sharpest afflictions for Christs sake. Thy Saviour, O my soule, though God, yet was called a divell, nay *Belzebub* the Prince of divels; though temperate, yet called a drunkard and Winebibber, and companion to Publicans and Harlots; though a man without guile, yet called a deceiver; though innocent, yet scoffed, imprisoned, condemned, and executed as a malefactour. 'Tis just thus with thee O my soule: thou art studious to walke uprightly, and yet censured for an hypocrite: thou laboureſt to be better then any, and yet the world judges thee to be worse then any: thou laboureſt more for humility and love, then for all the wealth in the World, and yet the World judges thee to be fuller of pride, and malice, then any man: thou dost not blow a Trumpet, when thou giveſt

almes, but hideſt from thy left hand, what thy right hand doth, and therefore the world thinkes that thy religion towards God, is without mercy towards man: thou thinkeſt no evil to others, but laboureſt to doe good to all, and yet all almoſt thinke evill, or ſpeake evill, or doe evill againſt thee. In this, O my ſoule, thou art not alone, 'twas the condition of thy Saviour; therefore mourne not, O my ſoule, but rejoyce, according to the divine rule, that thou art made like him. Thus the teſtimony of Conſcience concerning a mans ſincerity, brings in matter of comfort and joy to the ſoule of man, in the midſt of troubles, and makes it ſmile, when under heavy burthens of cruelty.

Laſtly, it muſt needs be, that the teſtimony of Conſcience concerning the ſimplicity of a mans converſation, ſhould miniſter joy in the midſt of troubles, becauſe ſuch plainely ſee their intereſt in the divine Word of conſolation. *Be glad in the Lord, and reioyce ye righteous, and ſhout for ioy all yee that are upright in heart*, Pſalm. 32. 11. Conſcience now tels me that I am upright in heart; and that in ſimplicity and uprightneſſe I have had my converſation in the World; and ſo conſequently that joy here, as well as hereafter, belongs to me. Out of this reaſoning, betweene Conſcience and the divine Word of conſolation, joy will breake forth in the ſoule firſt or laſt, lade an upright man with what burthens you will. *Reioyce all ye that are upright in heart*, ſaith God: thou art upright in heart, ſaith Conſcience to a ſincere ſoule; and Conſcience will not ſtay here, but will preſſe

presse upon the soule to apply his owne mercies; why then dost not thou rejoyce? Dost thou thinke it a small matter, to disobey a command of God? This pressing language of Conscience, will make a sincere soule strive hard, and pray hard, to rejoyce in afflictions for Christs sake, according to the divine rule, which prayer God will heare, and bring the upright soule at last, to say in the midst of troubles, with these champions in my text, *For our rejoycing is this, the testimony of our conscience; that in simplicity and Godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdome, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.*

Having given you the point and the grounds of it, a word or two I would speake by way of application, to you that are unsound, and then a word more to you that are sincere, and so conclude this point. This doctrine may in the first place serve to unfold a riddle to you that are unsound. Possibly you may wonder to see a man goe rejoycing to prison, and to fire and fagot, especially when censured by learned men, for such and such a malefactour: you it may be thinke of such a man, as he of *Paul* that he is mad and merry without cause, as bedlams are; or else that he laughs from the teeth outward, as he that would put a good face upon an ill matter. No, no, doe not judge so uncharitably, it may be this man hath meat to eate, which ye know not of. It may be hath his Conscience testifying within, that he hath walked in all uprightnesse, and is not such a one, as the World hath censured him to be; and this makes him rejoyce, in the

midst of all troubles. 'Twas wonderfull to *Nebuchadnezzar*, to see the three children walke in the fiery furnace as if they had beene walking in his stately walkes, because he was not aware that they had such a divine comfortable companion, as they had. So 'tis wonderfull to blind worldlings, to see men so chearefull in suffering for trifles in Religion (as they call them) and the reason is, because they know not that divine comforter, Conscience; which is continually within them, and unto them a feast: this is to walke sincerely, to be tender to obey all Gods will, and this Conscience tels the soule, in the midst of all the troubles he undergoes, from men of corrupt minds, and large Consciences; and this language of Conscience, being attended with the *glorious power of the Holy Ghost*, as a comforter, this soule cannot but rejoyce, though bleeding upon a Pillory, groaning upon a Racke, dying upon a Crosse, and condemned by wise men for a foole, in standing out in such small matters.

Secondly, as this doctrine tels you blinde soules, the reason why some are so chearefull, under great troubles, for smal things; so it tels you that are a little more growne in hypocrisie and wickednesse, that your designe against the godly is frustrate. The maine designe of the divell and his children, in all the troubles he puts them to, is, to deprive them of all joy and comfort, and to make their being upon Earth Hell, which is a place without all consolation. Now this they can never doe, for as much as they cannot deprive them of the peace of conscience, and joy of the holy Ghost, which

which goe hand in hand, in an upright heart. True it is, if all the joy of the godly did consist in outward things, as wicked mens joy doth, then possibly they might serve the godly, as God will one day serve them, to wit, utterly strip them of all consolation; but the least part of an upright mans joy, consists in externall things; his prime joy is within, from Conscience; and the Holy Ghost, which keepe company alwaies in it; and these two, all the wicked men upon earth, nor all the Divels in Hell, cannot suspend, much lesse silence from speaking comfort to an upright heart. Conscience will still say this within, that he which so walkes as before mentioned, is upright; when men and divels without, say, that he is an hypocrite, a dissembler and not worthy to live. And the Holy Ghost will still second this language of Conscience, by speaking over the same againe: in such glorious expressions, and with such sweetned words, will the Spirit of God beare witnesse with the spirit of man, that doe what you will to this man, he will still, notwithstanding all, rejoyce. Cast him into prison, nay cast him into a dungeon, a dirty dungeon, as *Ieremies* was; nay, cast him into a fiery Furnace; into a fiery Furnace heat seven times hotter then ordinary, *Give his backe to the smiters, and his cheekes to them that plucke off the haire, as the Prophet speaks, Isai.* 50. 6. doe what you will to him, yet you will never deprive him of his joy. As long as breath is in his nostrils, Conscience will comfort him; and when this is gone, by thy cruelty, he will be in fulnesse of joy; and in the fuller, by how much the more cruelty thou hast

inflicted on him. The joy of Conscience is proportioned to what we suffer, for Conscience; *as the afflictions of Christ, abound in us, so shall our joyes* both here and hereafter. And therefore doe not breake your sleepe and your braines, to plot mischiefe against the upright, for they will have more joy in suffering cruelty, then you can have in inflicting it. You doe but lessen your owne joy, to encrease theirs. The more terible you are unto them, the more shal the testimony of Conscience be attended, with a glorious Spirit of consolation, which wil make them rejoyce and be *exceeding glad* under all that you can inflict; and this wil exceedingly vex you.

Thirdly, this doctrine wil acquaint you with this truth: That if consciousnesse of sincerity, wil lessen and sweeten troubles, by giving joy to the upright in the midst of them; consciousnesse of hypocrisie and unsoundnesse, must needs imbitter all troubles, and make them more pressing and piercing, upon you that are halters and time-servers: this was that which *Jobs* friends drove at, in all their discourses with him, to bring him to sorrow doubly and trebly, for as much as all his outward miseries were attended (as they conceived) with inward rottennesse: intimating, and that truly, that it must be so and wil be so with all hypocrites, when Conscience is once throughly awakened, to tel them of their unsoundnesse, under afflictions. What a terrible sting wil this be, to a man in poverty, when his Conscience shall tell him: Thou hast shufled and shifted basely to get wealth, and yet by all thy unjust waies, thou canst

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scarce keepe a cue above a begger. This blunt language of Conscience, will be such an addition of sorrow to poverty, as will exceed the pressure of poverty when at greatest. What a sting will this be to a man in disgrace, when his Conscience shal tel him, Thou hast been a time-server; one that hast studied to humour and please men, more then God, that thou mightest get honour, and keep honour in the world, and yet for all thy dog-like fauning and flattering, thou stinkest in the nostrils of all, and art cast unto the dunghill as unsavory salt? What a sting will this be to a man in sickness and death, when his Conscience shall tel him, that he hath been but an outside Christian, all the daies of his life; a man zealous about humane inventions and bodily exercises, to give God the out side, and careless to worship God in spirit and truth? this close language of Conscience, will pain a man more then any sickness, or death can doe. This was that which stung *Balaam* worse then death, that his Conscience told him, he had been but an hypocrite all his life. This made *Judas* hang himself, after he had sold his master for mony, for as much as his Conscience told him then strongly, that he had been but an hypocriticall follower of Christ, from the first to the last. And thus would every rotten wretch doe or worse, in every little trouble, if God should not admirably stop in, and restrain, and hinder; so terible is the sting of Conscience, when it testifies against a man, and such deep additions of griefe it bringeth to the soul in every calamity. *Sharp arrows and coals of*

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Iuniper, Conſcience ſhooteth and kindleth in the ſoule of man, in every trouble, when it teſtifieth againſt him as the Pſalmiſt uſeth the expreſſions, in relation to the hypocrite, the man concerning whom I heare treat of. *Pſal.* 120. 4.

Wherefore I would exhort you all that are unſound at heart, to beg upright hearts at the hands of God, that you may walk uprightly, and ſo have the teſtimony of Conſcience with you, to rejoyce you in all your troubles. Your labour by hook and by crook to get wealth to ſtand by you, and to comfort you in troubles; and this will prove *gravell in your bellies* to torture you, as *Solomon* affirmeth, ſo far it will be from comforting you in troubles. The teſtimony of conſcience concerning your ſincerity, is better then all the wealth in the world, to ſtand by you & to revive you in troubles. You flatter and fawn, turn and winde, ſhuffle and ſhift, to get great men to be your friends to ſtand by you, and to comfort you in troubles; and alas! their favour is a vapour; as unconſtant as the winde. Walke ſincerely, and Conſcience wil be a faithfull friend for you to the death; yea after death in judgement. If thou hadſt the favour of all the Princes in the world, yet could not they procure for thee a dram of comfort in ſickneſſe, in death, or in judgement: Conſcience in all theſe times can, and will procure for thee, not onely drams, but flagons of conſolation, if thou walke ſincerely. Conſcience is an incomparable friend, or foe, in ſickneſſe, death, and judgement.

The blindneſſe and folly of man above all other creatures, is much to be wondered at; he hunts after

ter things *which are not*, as *Solomon* ſaith, to be comforters to him, and takes no pains to procure that which will indeed bee ſtable and abiding comfort to him in all ſtates. Riches, and honours, and friends, all the things of this life they are called by *Solomon*, *things that are not*, becauſe they are not ſuch things as the blinde heart of man conceives them to be: he thinks they are ſufficient to make him happy, and they are not ſo. The leaſt fit of ſickneſſe will *non-plus* all theſe things, for reviving the ſoul. Vain man like that fool, thinks that he hath comfort enough for many yeares; that is for all his life, when he hath great revenues in the world, and therefore ſings a *requiem* to his ſoul, as if there needed no other thing, to the tranquillity of the Spirit, thorowout a mans life, but worldly things; and alas! theſe things are not abiding, but ſtill upon the wing, ready to fly from us; and if they were abiding, yet they are not ſatisfying: and therefore *Solomon* cals them, *Vanity and vexation* to the ſpirit. Conſcience is a laſting friend, and a ſubſtantiall friend, to the ſpirit of man. A friend that hath ſuch waters of life, which will revive the ſoul in the greateſt extremities; and he is a fountain made by God, that will never wax dry; So that the ſoul, as long as ſhe keeps her ſelfe ſincere, ſhall never be without a ſpring of joy, boiling up day and night within her.

And this joy is not a low priſed commodity, a thing little worth: 'tis called in Scripture, a *joy of the Lord*, ſuch a joy of God, as is the *ſtrength* of man. When the Levites had opened the Law unto the people, their Conſciences were awakened, and

and smote them so, that they wept, saith the Text, and weakned and unfitted themselves, for the duties of the day; and therefore the Levites were fain to comfort them, that Conscience might take hold on something to worke joy in them, which is the strength of the soul, unto the duty of thanksgiving, which was the speciall worke of that day. As an accusing condemning Conscience, secretly consumes spirits and strength of soule and body; and when attended only with a legall spirit, begets such a horrid griefe in the heart of man, as unfit for the highest and noblest service of God: So an acquitting Conscience doth exhilarate and revive the soul; as being attended with an Evangelicall spirit, begets such a joy in the heart, as tunes and strengthens it unto all divine duties, especially unto thanksgiving, which is the highest and hardest divine lesson that can be played upon the heart of fallen man; but makes the sweetest melody in the eares of God, of all divine lessons committed to man to learn. If thou then wouldst be a sweet singer in *Israel*, a man apt and able to that which God most loves, walke so that Conscience may still be an acquitter within thee: if this accuse and condemne thee, 'twill put every string in thy heart out of tune; consume thy spirits, and make thy living a continuall dying, and yet death undesirable.

Secondly, divine joy is called in Scripture an *exceeding joy*. *I am exceeding joyfull in all our tribulations*, saith *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 7. 4. The joy which Conscience gives to an upright man in all tribulations for righteousnesse sake, is an exceeding joy; a

joy

joy that doth far more take, content, and delight the ſoul then any other joy can doe: ſo the Apoſtle explains this clauſe, by that which goes before it in the ſame verſe. *I am [filled] with comfort*, (ſaith he) *I am exceeding joyfull in all our tribulations*. Conſcience gives ſuch a joy to the ſoul in tribulations, that fils the ſoul with comfort, which is more then all the ſweets and delights of this world can do. The delights of this life they doe not reach the ſoul of man; they reach no farther then the externall ſenſes, ſo far are they from filling the ſoul with comfort; and yet they do not fill nor ſatisfie theſe neither, for the eye is not ſatisfied with ſeeing, nor the eare with hearing, nor the noſe with ſmelling, nor the tongue with taſting, nor the hand with handling. 'Tis but a tyring, and not a ſatisfying joy, that all outward things bring to the outward ſenſes. That joy which only the externall ſenſes bring into the ſoul, *Solomon* calls *madneſſe*, as not worthy of the name of joy, becauſe it reaches not the ſpirit of man as rationall, but as meerly ſenſitive. The joy which conſcience brings into the ſoul, doth not barely reach the ſoul, but it fils it, and ſatisfies it. *My ſoul ſhall be ſatisfied as with marrow and fatneſſe, and my mouth ſhall praiſe thee with joyfull lips; when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate upon thee in the night-watches*, *Pſal.* 63. 5. 6. If thou wilt live all thy daies, with the joy of a bruit, with a meer ſenſuall outſide, ſpiritleſſe, vaine, vexing joy, then thou needſt not take paines to order thy converſation ſincerely, to get thy Conſcience to teſtifie with thee; but if thou wouldſt live all thy

dayes,

dayes in the joy of a man that beares the Image of God, then must thou strive so to walk, that Conscience may beare witnesse that thou art sincere.

The Scripture doth not stay here, but calls divine joy *everlasting*; which is an attribute so high, that it leads us necessarily to the originall, to wit, God, who is everlasting. As hell is a place of everlasting sorrow to all that be in it, because a river of brimstone from an everlasting fountain, runs to it; so heaven which is begun in joy upon earth, to wit, in the hearts of the upright, 'tis everlasting, because fresh streams of consolation continually come from an everlasting fountain, to wit, God. God alwaies seconds Conscience in him that is sincere, with such a *glorious power* as Saint *Paul* calls it, that though he be alwaies in sorrowes for Christs sake, yet he is alwaies rejoycing: *As sorrowfull, yet alwaies rejoycing*, 2. *Cor.* 6. 10. You may many waies cause sorrow to an upright man, but yet joy will live in all, and outlive all his sorrows. You may set on fire the body of an upright man, and consume that; but you can never set on fire his joy and consume that. You may various waies kill a sincere man, but you can no way kill his joy, as long as he holds fast his integrity. The joy that Conscience gives to the soule of man, upon testimony of his sincerity, 'twill live in fire, 'twill live in water, 'twill live in this land, 'twill live in any land; famine cannot starve it, plagne cannot infect it, the sword cannot murther it, the rack cannot tear it; 'tis very healthy, 'tis long-lived, 'twill never die: 'tis from heaven, and will abide with the soul untill he come to Heaven; and then will

be

be consummated, to give full solace to the soul for ever. If then thou wouldst have joy to sticke by thee, in health, in sickness, in peace, in war, in plenty, in famine, in honour, in disgrace, in liberty, in bonds, in life, in death, and eternally after death, walke so that thy Conscience may say that thou art simple and sincere in thy conversation.

The Scripture staies not here, but cals divine joy *unspeakable and full of glory*. As that joy which just men made perfect inherit, is beyond conception, so that it cannot enter into the heart of man to conceive of it, so that joy which Conscience gives to upright men in troubles, 'tis beyond expression: the tongue of man cannot fully expresse it. I doe not affirm that the heart of man cannot fully conceive it, though possibly it may be so. 'Tis joy unspeakably strong: stronger and more vehement, then the joy of worldlings, when corn and wine and oile increase; and yet 'tis hard to expresse how much joy an earthy heart hath, in great earthly increase. 'Tis joy unspeakably sweet, so that he which tastes of this joy, tastes no more sweetnesse in sensuall things, then in the white of an egge: 'tis sweeter then the honey or the honey-comb: that is, sweeter and more pleasing to the soul, then all the delights of this life, to the carnall heart; and yet 'tis hard to expresse how sweet and pleasing sensuall delights are, to the carnall heart of man.

'Tis joy unspeakably pure: as *David* saith, that *the feare of the Lord is clean*; so I may say, that the joy of the Lord, which he gives to man upon the testimony of Conscience concerning his sincerity,

'tis

'tis clean; that is, 'tis pure, unspeakably pure, and holy. What was said of the generation of Christ, that may be said of the generation of divine joy, *Who can declare his generation?* saith the Scripture of Christ; so may I say, Who can declare the generation of divine joy? 'Tis begotten in the heart, as Christ was in *Maries* womb, to wit, by the holy Ghost: 'tis shed abroad in the heart, by the holy Ghost: 'tis continually nourished and cherished by the holy Ghost. It fils the heart full of holy thoughts, the mouth full of holy words, and the hands full of holy deeds. It is immediately from heaven, and makes a man have his conversation in heaven, whilst on earth.

'Tis joy unspeakably precious: a dram of it is more worth then the world: a damned soule in hell would give ten thousand worlds, if there were so many, for the least drop of this cooling comforting liquor, to assuage his scorching torments but for a moment. It hath heaven in it, with which what can be compared for worth? 'Tis *joy unspeakeable and full of glory*. The smiling face of God, which is more glorious then the Sun, may be seen in it, so diaphanous is it.

'Tis joy unspeakeably lasting: whereas all other joyes die when man dies, if not long before; this joy lives, as long as the soule and God lives. Labour then so to live, that Conscience may testifie before God and you, that you are sincere, and so lead your soules into that unspeakable joy which will make you unspeakably happy.

I have now a word or two to you which walke sincerely and uprightly in this world, and so I shut up

up this point. If you do not yet finde experimentally, the truth of this point; to wit, your consciences causing you to rejoyce in the midst of your troubles, by a lively testifying your integrity to you, then by prayer plead your integrity to God, and intreat him so transcendently to second conscience, with his *glorious power which worketh in us*, that your hearts may be revived under every pressure for pitties sake. Thus *David* was forced to do sometimes, to wit, plead his integrity, to finde the benefit of it in troubles; for God will be sought unto for every good thing, though we be never so sincere, *Let integrity and uprightnesse preserve me, for I wait on thee, Psalm* 25.21. *David* you see was put to it, to pleade his integrity to God, to obtain the benefit of it in troubles; and thus must we still doe if we finde our hearts to droop in troubles, although we are conscious to our selves of our upright and innocent conversation. Say, Lord thou knowest that I have walked uprightly concerning this thing and that, about which I am troubled, and therefore doe thou stand up in my heart, and second my conscience by the Almighty power of thy holy Spirit, and make it speak peace so lively and so gloriously within me, that I may rejoyce in this tribulation for thy sake; that I may finde my integrity, as a cordiall to me, to keep me from fainting in my minde, and from stretching out tongue or hand to iniquity.

If you finde the comfortable testimony of conscience reviving and rejoycing you in your troubles, then blesse God with *David*, that he

hath enabled you so to walke in this wretched world, as to have the voice of conscience with you that you are sincere. T is of God that we walk uprightly a moment: did not he stand by us, & watch over our deceitfull hearts, and uphold our goings in his paths, we should shew our selves hypocriticall wretches in all our waies. *God is my strength and power, and he maketh my way perfect*, *Psal.* 28. 32. When the lively testimony of conscience, concerning *Davids* integritie, had rejoyced, and raised his dull spirit, then he took wing, and made his soul mount up to heaven like an Eagle, to magnifie God which had beene such strength and power to him, as to make his way perfect, that is, sincere, and so capable of deliverance from his insulting enemies [*God*] *is my strength and power, and* [*he*] *maketh my way perfect*. *David* would not appropriate the praise of his upright and innocent conversation to himself, as if he by his own wisdome, strength and goodnesse, had made his way perfect and upright; he had through experience of the rottennesse of his own heart, and his aptnesse to declare it, if God had not been a speciall strength and aid unto him, in his conversation; and therefore doth he so humbly & imitably say, [*God*] *is my strength and power, &* [*he*] *maketh my way perfect*, 2 *Sam.* 22. 33. he inabled me so to walk, as to be capable of the accomplishment of his promises of defence against, and victory over ungodly men, and no wisdome, strength, or goodnesse of his own. Thus let us humbly doe, when we feele our hearts leap within us, as rejoyced by the secret testimony of

conscience, concerning the integrity of our carriage, in this or that matter of weight and triall that we were put upon; Thou wast my wisdom, strength, and power, O God, to guide and enable me to walke uprightly in such and such hazardous matters; my heart is deceitfull, and full of base feare, and if thou hadst not stood up as a mighty God in my weak spirit, I had been overborn with fleshly fears, and selfe-respects, to the wounding of my integrity, and thy Gospel and glory: blessed be thy name, that didst enable me to look over all by ends, to thy glory; and to acquit my selfe, at the time of triall, answerable to my upright purpose and resolution: tis of thee to will and to doe good, and unto thee I give all the glory. This is the good way to have God stand by us still, and so mightily to guide us in all our wayes, that we shall keep faith and a good conscience to our grave, and so consequently our joy, which is the life of our lives. This was upright *Iobs* sweet carriage, as we may gueſſe by his language. *Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul: I would despise my life.* If I were for holines as just men made perfect in glory, yet whileſt a soule so holy, is in a body so diseased, I could not take any pleasure in my life. Thus to interpret theſe words, is to give us a hint and more, that *Iob* was extreamly overgone with impatience under Gods hand, which is the worſt that can be said upon this place: I think there may be hinted this unto us (if the other be the maine scope) that *Iob* saw all the integrity & uprightnes he had, or possibly could be had, was from God,

and that he had no reason to boast and magnifie himself, what ever his endowments were.

Lastly, if you finde by comfortable experience the truth of my doctrine, that the testimony of conscience concerning your sincerity, causeth joy and rejoycing in our soules, then hang upon God for perseverance in a sincere way, that your joy may abide, and still more and more increase, as the light of the Sun unto the perfect day. You have tasted of the sweetnesse of a sincere way, & therefore you should zealously follow God, to keepe you on in it, as long as breath is in your nostrils, that you may never lose your grapes, your first-fruits of the Holy Land, your taste of Heaven, untill you come to the full fruition of it: Twas *Davids* prayer often (and let it be yours) though he were sincere, that *God would make his heart sound in his statutes*. There is much rottennesse in the best heart, and this will breake forth in a mans life, to the dishonour of God, and the wounding of his conscience, and robbing of his joy, if he be not still with *David*, hanging upon God by prayer, for more and more uprightnesse, and for further and further cleansing of an unsound heart. Things that are apt to bend and become crooked, we are every foot rectifying and straightning them, and labouring to strengthen them, so that they may abide straight, and so be still fit for use and service. You know to what to apply this, if I should not tell you, to the heart of man. Flattery or violence will turne you aside from your sincere walking, if you doe not humbly seek God still with *David*, to make

make your heart ſound in his ſtatutes, and to bee ſtill with you, to uphold your ſteps in his paths. You will ſhipwracke Conſcience, and all the peace and joy you have by it quickly, as *Peter* did, if you grow confident of your own ſtrength, and doe not feare alwaies, and depend upon your God, for ability, to doe every thing uprightly. And therefore leane not to your owne underſtanding as *Solomon* ſaid to his Sonne, nor to any parts elſe you have, to ſteere your converſation, if you would maintaine the integritie and uprightneſſe of it; but renounce all in your ſelves, and beg God to make you run and not be weary, and to deliver you from back-ſliding in heart and life, to make you faithfull to the death, and to give you at laſt the crowne of life.

This counſell that you may carefully follow, think on theſe two or three things. The peace and joy of a good Conſcience, is better than the greateſt preferment in the world, and the loſſe of it, is worſe than the loſſe of thy life, in the cruelleſt way that man can invent. Thou wilt loſe a little heaven, and create within thy heart a little hell, which will laſt till the marrow of thy bones bee conſumed, and thy moiſture turned into the drought of ſummer, in the day that thou turneſt aſide from thy ſincere courſe, and ſetteſt Conſcience againſt thee. The joy of an acquitting Conſcience, is unſpeakable and full of glory; and ſo the ſorrow of an accuſing condemning Conſcience, is unſpeakable and full of terrour.

Tis ſorrow unſpeakable ſtrong What God ſaid to the woman, after ſhee had turned aſide

from the upright way of the Lord, that I may say of all the seed of the woman, when once they turn aside from their upright conversation. *Unto the woman God said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow, Gen.*3 16. Sorrow multiplied, is to have *sorrow upon sorrow*, as *Paul* useth the expression to the *Philippians*. A in child-bearing there is pang upon pang; and these returns of pangs, grow still stronger and stronger, till the womb be discharged of her burthen; so say I to you, in the day that you turn aside from upright walking, God will greatly multiply your sorrow; you shall have sorrow upon sorrow, pang upon pang by an accusing Conscience; and these pangs shall still be stronger and stronger, till you have humbled your soules throughly for your halting, and got your Consciences sprinkled with the bloud of Christ.

The sorrowes which God distributeth to his, when they turn aside from sincere walking, they are sorrows fetcht from hell, and those sorrowes of all sorrows, are the strongest. *The sorrows of hell compassed me*, saith the Psalmist. To turn aside from uprightnesse, and holinesse, was the practice of the evill angels, for whom hell was first founded, and therefore God doth borrow some sorrows from thence, to punish such sins in his children, which carry a neere similitude to their sin: that *similes vitio*, may be *similes supplicio*; like in sin, may be like in punishment. The sorrowes which God inflicts upon revolters, for similitude sake, are called the sorrows of hell.

The sorrows of hell God distributeth in anger, as *Iob* saith, *How oft is the candle of the wicked put*

out?

out? and oft commeth their deſtruction upon them: God diſtributeth ſorrows in his anger Iob.21.17. So the ſorrowes which God diſtributeth to his people, when they turne aſide from their ſincere walking, are from God, as with an angry frowning vizard upon his face, as if he were indeed very angry, as indeed he is with the ſin, though not with the perſon of the godly; for he hates ſin in all, with a perfect hatred. The ſorrowes which God will diſtribute to thee by accuſing Conſcience, when thou halteſt, ſhall be ſuch as in which thou ſhalt ſee nothing, but the angry face of God, and this will make thee tremble and ſorrow, as the Lord ſpeaks of the Babylonians, *Ier.*51.29 as the very damned in hell doe, as one that feeleth the very ſorrows of hell to compaſſe thee. God looking angerly upon the earth, it trembleth, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.*104.32. The earth is the vaſteſt and greateſt bodie under Heaven, and therefore leaſt apt to ſhaking; and the foundations of it were laid by Gods owne immediate hand; and yet if God doe but looke angerly upon this firm ſtable bodie, ſo tranſcendently founded, it trembleth: how much more then needs muſt man which is but a little duſt of that grave vaſt bodie, ſhake and tremble, when God as an angry God looks upon him?

Secondly, the ſorrows of hell are ſuch as principally torture the ſpirit. The fire which wee make can onely burne and torture the bodies of men; becauſe this only of man is materiall: immaterials, as the ſouls of men are, our fire cannot faſten upon: but that *ſtrange fire*, which God

Ignis ſocatis immaterialis non uritur, inquit philoſophus.

hath kindled in hell, for all that disobey him, burns the souls of men, though immateriall substances. Nay, so strange is that fire, that it burns these immateriall substances most fiercely, as being the most sinfull part of man; for tis onely sin that pitches and defiles the soule, and makes it combustible, which otherwise would never burn, if all the fiery artists of hell did blow the bellows. Now, just such is that fire, which Conscience kindles upon the breach of integrity; to wit, a fire that principally tortures the spirit of man: a fire that burns inwardly, and consumes the marrow of the bones, and drinks up the spirits. The arrowes which Conscience shoots in upon a man, upon the breach of sincerity, are such as pierce principally the spirit. As long as *Iob* was patient under Gods hand, he felt the arrowes of the Almighty onely without him, as I may say, to wit, in his bodie, in his children and substance; but when hee brake out and cursed his day, hee presently complaines, that hee felt the arrowes of God within him, and that the poison of them did drinke up his spirits, *Iob.6.4.* All that which before he felt without, was nothing to that which he now felt within upon his spirit; as the torments which damned wretches shall suffer in their bodies, are nothing to those which shal continually flee up and down within their souls. So *David* after he had made breaches in his integrity, God filled his loynes with loathsome diseases, but this was nothing to speake of; God made things strike into his heart, and then hee roared, *I am feeble and sore broken, I have roared by reason*

of

of the [disquietnesse of my heart.] David felt pains gather about his heart, and then he cries out. The heart is the marke that God principally aimes at, when a Christian hath turned aside from his upright course: other outward parts he may hit and deeply wound, but this is but to make holes into the heart, where the seate of unsoundnesse that principally offends him is. The fire which Conscience kindles, it may flash forth into the eyes, and tongue, and hands, and make a man looke fearfully, speak desperately, and doe bloodily, against the bodie; but the heat of the fire is principally within, in the furnace, in the spirit; tis but some sparkles and flashes onely, that you see come forth at the lower holes of the furnace, which you behold in the eyes, words, and deeds of such men.

Thirdly, the sorrowes of Hell are torturing, but yet not such as utterly consume and end the soule. The fire which we make, let it fasten on never so hard a thing, yet it will consume it in length of time. But that strange fire that God hath kindled in Hell for all that disobey him, though it burne with the greatest fiercenes that can be conceived, yet it never consumes the soules of those that are now burned in it; no nor yet the bodies that shall hereafter be burned in it. Damned soules are ever burning, and yet never burned; ever a consuming, and yet never consumed; and this addes infinitely to the misery of the damned. Even such is that fire which conscience kindles in the soul of man, upon the breach of integrity. Tis a fire that will burne and torture the soule day and night, but never

ver consume it. *Heman* complaines that this fire burnt so fiercely in his soule, that it distracted his spirit, but yet did not end his spirit, *While I suffer thy terror I am distracted, Psal.* 88.15. The terrors that conscience kindles in the spirit, will rack the spirit, rend and teare limbe from limbe, faculty from faculty, and make the spirit mad with horrour and anguish, but yet for all this not put a period to the spirit: he shall be as suspective and as sensible of tortures to day as yesterday, and to morrow as to day, and next weeke as this week, next year as this year, the last day of his life, as the first day they begun, if God doe not admirably intercept. Conscience pangs the soule in chaines alive upon the breach of integritie; and there lets the soule beate himselfe, and bite and gnaw himself, but yet cannot when he would end himselfe, and this makes every torture double. *O that I might have my request! and that God would grant me the thing that I long for!* Why, what *Iob* dost thou long for? why, *even that it would please God to destroy me: that he would yet loose his hand and cut me off.* No *Iob*, your spirit has hanged but a while, tis not dead yet, & therefore it shall not be cut downe. The things that *Iobs* soule refused to touch, were made by conscience his daily sorrowfull meat, and this Gall & Wormwood fretted his guts, but did not strangle and end him; conscience forct him every day, and every night to drink a new draught, that kept his spirit in continuall torture, and yet he could not get his soule out of his bodie, nor have it consumed in. The terrours that conscience kindles, they are so terrible,

terrible, that they wil make a man wish for death, nay inflict death upon himselfe, and all to put an end unto them, and yet all will not doe, because these tortures fasten upon the spirit, but destroy not the spirit.

Finally, the sorrowes of Hell, they are such as are not in the least measure pittied by God. Though the damned in Hell be tormented with sulfurous flames, which is a very fierce fire; and though they crie and roare, howle, and yell, shrich and gnash teeth continually, and all this in the hearing of God continually, which would stirre, nay, turne the bowels of any man, to heare but a moment; yet it stirres not God a jot, though he had heard those dolorous cries so many hundred yeares, to give them the least good word, or good look. So that sorrow which conscience raises in the soule upon the breach of sincerity, God seems not to pitty in the least measure, for a long time. Though the spirit of man be rackt, tortured, and affrighted even unto distraction, yet God will not so much as afford a good looke to the soule. Though he pray and fast, and consume himselfe with fasting, yet not any beame of light and love, that the revolting soule shall see in the countenance of God, to take hold on, and to comfort himself by. Hence tis that the Psalmist complains of God and his mercie as clean gone. *Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? is his mercy cleane gone for ever? doth his promise fail for ever more?* Psal. 77. 7. 8. Nay, many times God serves back-sliding Christians, as he served the Israelites of old, to wit, encreases their sorrow

when

when they are in earnest suit for release and comfort; so far he is from pittying of them: and as *Joseph* carried himself to his brethren; in stead of pittying them in their want, he spake affrightingly to them, and told them that they were spies, and so put them in feare of the losse of their lives. Iust thus for a time doth God usually carry himselfe to revolting Christians: he is so far from pittying them, notwithstanding all their prayers, that he cals them dogges, and speaks roughly to them, and puts them in fear of the losse of their best lives, and seems resolved to proceed against them as his enemies, beg and cry as long as they will. *Iob* points at this, where he saith, *Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy? Iob.* 13. 24. And is not this Hell indeed, to be in soule-misery, and to have no compassion from God? To be pittied and condoled by a mans friend, though he be not able to help him, we take it as a great mercy, and moderation of misery; *Iob* would so have accounted it. But when such as we take for friends, do not only forbear to pity, but set themselves against us in our misery, and adde to our afflictions; this makes misery unspeakably miserable, and a lively Emblem of hell indeed: But I go no further this way.

Secondly, as the sorrow which conscience causeth upon the breach of sincerity, is unspeakably strong, no other in a manner but the torments of Hell; so tis oft-times unspeakably sudden. As the Wind raises hideous stormes and tempests at Sea on a sudden, that endanger the drowning of all; So Conscience, when once the soule hath turned aside

aſide to crooked wayes, oft times of a ſudden raiſes hideous ſtorms & tempeſts in the ſoul, which addes exceedingly to the torture. Horrour and terrour breaking forth ſuddenly, affrightes more by far, then if it came with warning. The fire that conſcience kindles in the ſoule, is like the ſetting a fire of Gun-powder; very ſudden, as tis very fierce. After once a breach is made upon ſincerity, conſcience laies trains of wilde-fire and blows up all a mans joy on an inſtant, & ſets on fire the ſoul, & then lets in legions of ſuch ſpirits whoſe dwelling is only in fire, to keep garriſon againſt all promiſes of good to this ſoule, and then the ſoule becoms like *Paſhur, fear round about*: the face of *God* terrible; the face of friends terrible; the thought of ſickneſſe, death; and the thought of death, Hell; & the thought of Hell, as at the door, & unavoidable As the Arrows which *God* wil ſhoot againſt the enemies of his Church, ſhall go forth as lightning, *Zec.* 9. 14. ſo the Arrows wch God ſhoots by conſcience, againſt ſuch as turn aſide to evil waies they go forth oft times as lightning, very ſudden, and very ſwift. Sometimes when a ſin like *Belſhazzar* is in the very act of ſin, conſcience writes down a mans doom in his heart, and in ſuch legible Letters, that the ſinner cannot chooſe but read and tremble. When a ſinner is taking pleaſure in unrighteouſneſſe, of a ſudden conſcience breaks forth into thundring and lightning in the ſoule, & the ſinner is as one deſcending quick into Hel. *And* [*immediately, while he yet ſpake*] *the Cock crew, and the Lord looked back upon Peter*, ſaith the Text, *Luke* 22. 60. On a ſudden, while *Peter* was in

in the very act of denying, a Cock crew within, to wit, conscience that made *Peters* spirit die within him. Once and twice *Peter* denied Christ, and Christ did not awaken conscience, and set him at him to pull him by the throat, but the third time, *immediately while he yet spake*, Conscience like a Lion ranne upon his soule, and made him believe that he would be a tormentor to him, as he is to the damned before the time. Sometime conscience may let a man alone, after he is turned aside from sincere walking, but if the soule still go on, of a sudden conscience will breake forth, into thundering and lightning, so fiercely as he did in *Peters* soule, on whom if Christ had not looked back, *Peter* would have gone neare to have served himselfe as *Judas*, after he had betrayed his Master.

To conclude all, This I am sure, O sincere soule, that as conscience will make thee know to thy comfort, that tis a sweet thing faithfully and sincerely to serve God; so conscience will make thee know to thy griefe, that it is an evill and a bitter thing, to turne away from the good way of the Lord. Having therefore now set good and evill before thee, make a wise choice. Choose rather to undergoe any thing, that man or devil can invent, that thou maiest still enjoy the peace and joy of a good conscience, then to have the greatest honor this world will afford, and shipwrack sincerity, and so lie liable to the lash of an evill conscience.

The

The fourth Sermon.

2 Cor. 1.12.

For our rejoycing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdome, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, & more abundantly to you-wards, but especially amongst you.

THE fourth and last proposition, which now according to order and method, comes to be handled, is this, *That there be speciall times and occasions, for the declaration of sincerity, which ought to be observed, and answerably to declare and shew our selves.* The Church of the Corinthians was very vitious in doctrine and manners, as we may plainly see by many expressions of S. *Paul*, in his first & second Epistles to them. They were *a* contentious, and *b* puffed up one against another. They had itching eares, and carnally gloried in men; one was for *c Paul*, and another for *Apollo*, and another for *Cephas*. They were voluptuous, that before they came to the Lords Supper, one was hungrie, another *d* drunken, in the house of God. They were followers of heathenish fashions, as in their apparel and meats, so in their haire, wearing it so long that very *e* nature, and the custome of the Church of Christ condemned it. They were *f* superstitious

a 1 Cor. 1. 11,
b 1 Cor. 4.6.
c 1 Cor. 1.12.
d 1 Cor. 11.21.
e 1 Cor. 11.14.16.
f 1 Cor. 10.25.

perstitious, *g* idolatrous, *h* adulterous, fornicators, abusers of themselves with mankind, theeves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners, murmurers, *i* tempters of Christ, *k* backbiters, whisperers, raisers of tumults, and what not? This grosse wickednesse made *Paul* to stirre up the grace of God in him, and to use great *boldnesse of speech*, towards this Church, as himselfe saith, 2 *Cor.* 7. 4. with all plainnesse and powerfulnesse, reproving their sins, and making manifest the truth, to every mans *l* conscience, in the sight of God. They were growne so loose, that *Paul* was forct to use such *m* sharp & home expressions, and with such Majesty, as you shall not finde him the like, to any Church. Twice in one Epistle useth he this upbraiding expression, *n I speak this to your shame*, which not once throughout all his Epistles, to any other Church, doth he use the like upbraiding language. And then delivering his reproofs, with such a transcendent Majesty. *Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet to Corinth*, 2 *Cor.* 1. 23. As if he wold dart their soules through, with such an holy feare of God, that their loose hearts for ever after might stand in awe and sinne not. Thus as this Church above all other, gave S. *Paul* speciall occasion for the declaration of his uprightnesse and sincerity, so answerably he couragiously applied himself unto them, which is the meaning of this expression in my text, *but more abundantly to you-ward*, or, *specially among you*.

Paul had dealt sincerely with all other Churches, but other Churches were not so openly wicked, and

g 1 Cor. 10. 14.
h 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10, 11.
i 1 Cor. 10. 9, 10.
k 2 Cor. 12. 20.
l 2 Cor. 4. 2.
m 2 Cor. 13. 10.
n 1 Cor. 5. 6.
1 Cor. 15. 34.

and therefore there needed not, that he should use such open majesticall contestation with them. This Church of *Corinth*, was very openly and wilfully wicked and therefore *Paul* mervelously opened his mouth against them. *O Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged: ye are not straitned in us, but ye are straightned in your own bowels*, 2. *Cor.* 6. 11. We have said enough and done enough (as if the Apostle had said) to worke upon your prophane hearts, and to turn you from your prophane lives, but yet your affections are straightned and clogged, that you come not off so readily, to follow our holy instructions as you should. The point you see to very naturally raised *That there be speciall times and occasions for the declaration of sincerity, which we ought to observe, and answerably to declare and shew our selves in our places.*

Speciall times and occasions for the declaration of sinceritie are either *personall, domesticall, sociall*, or *nationall*. Personall occasions, which require sinceritie after a special manner to be declared, are when a man is strongly assaulted by the world, the flesh or the devil, to sinne against God; or else strongly hindred in seeking the glorie of God, and the good of his Church. When *Simon* the sorceret saw that through laying on of the Apostles hands the holy Ghost was given, he offered *Peter* monie to impart his skill unto him, and so to have made him a merchant of the holy Ghost, for gain; then was a speciall personall occasion from the world, for *Peter* to declare his sinceritie, that he abhorred all unjust waies to get wealth, & that he was not mercenarie in his Ministerie, as the World might

suppose; which he wisely considered, and answerably carried himselfe. *Peter* stood up, and courageously said to *Simon* the sorcerer, *Thy mony perish with thee; because that thou thoughtest the gift of God may be purchased with mony, thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, & pray God if perhaps the thoughts of thy heart may be forgiven thee, for I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitternesse & bonds of iniquity, Act.* 8 18, 19, 20, 21. When *Samuel* was thought hardly of the people being strongly set to have a King, as other Nations had, not liking their government by Judges; then was a speciall personall occasion from the world, for *Samuel* to declare his integrity that he had walked faithfully as Gods Vicegerent over them, and had given them no just occasion, to wax weary of this way of government, & so consequently that they did evill to desire a King. *And Samuel said to all Israel, behold here I am, witnesse against me before the Lord, & before his Anointed: Whose Oxe have I taken, whose Asse have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hands have I received any bribe to blinde mine eyes therwith, & I will restore it you?* 1 *Sam.* 12 3. When *Barjesus* withstood *Paul* in his ministry, that he could not doe that good he would upon *Sergius Paulus*, then was speciall personall occasion from the world for *Paul* to declare his sincerity, that he strongly abhorred flatterers and time-servers, and dearly loved the glory of God, and the winning of souls unto him; which he wisely considered, & answerably with courage declared him-

3.

himself. *Then Saul who also is called Paul filled with the Holy Ghost set his eyes on him, and said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the Devil, thou enemy of all righteousnes, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right waies of the Lord?* Act. 13.9.10.

When *Paul* was strongly set upon by his own flesh, whē the law in his members rebeled against the law of his minde, and carried him captive to the law of sinne; then was a speciall *personall occasion from the flesh*, for *Paul* to declare his sincerity, that he loved God more then his lusts, and to please him, rather then to enjoy the pleasures of sinne, which he wisely considered, and answerably declared himselfe. *But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any meanes when I have preached to others, I my selfe should be a cast away*, 1 Cor 9.27. This is after a speciall manner to declare sincerity indeed, when a man couragiously fights against himselfe so farre forth as sinful & opposite to God. The lusts of the heart, are the enemies of a mans own house, which are the worst enemies of al, and therefore when these begin to warre and rebell against that holy light which is in our minde, then is a speciall time indeed for a man to stirre up the grace of God in him, and to declare his uprightnesse for God, whose throne the heart of man ought to be, or else God will give up the heart to the power and dominion of sinne, and then the soul is undone for ever. This *Paul*, wisely considered, and therefore when he felt this prick in the flesh, after a speciall manner molest him, he still after a speciall manner declared his uprightnesse in wrestling against it, 1 Cor. 12 7.

that so he might subdue his flesh, which other wise would have subdued his spirit, and outed Christ of his prime Hold, and S. *Paul* of his prime happinesse.

3. When the Devill tempted Christ to cast down himselfe from the top of a steep place, and to fall downe and worship him, and so to decline his Father utterly; then was a speciall *personall occasion from the Devill*, for Christ to declare his uprightness; that he prized every tittle of his Fathers will above all this World, and all the honours and pleasures in it. Which Christ wisely considered, and answerably with much courage and resolution declared himselfe. *Then said Iesus unto him, get thee hence Satan, for it is written, that thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him onely shalt thou serve, Matth.* 4 10. So when the Serpent subtilly got into one of the followers of Christ, and praied him to pitie and spare himselfe, from that painefull worke on which the glory of God, and the salvation of man so much depended; then was a speciall personall occasion from the Devill, for Christ againe to declare his sincerity, that he more regarded the glory of God, and the good of man, then his own life, though his life were worth a thousand of ours; which he thorowly considered and answerably declared himself, *Get thee behind me Satan, Mar.* 8.33 So when the Serpent subtilly set upon our first Parents, to draw them to eat of the forbidden fruit, then was a speciall personall occasion from the Devill, for them to have declared their uprightnesse; that they would not disobey their God in the least point though

though they might have been made Gods themselves, to do it: which because they did not seriously consider, and answearably carry themselves, they lost the confirmation of their happy being, and plunged themselves, and all us their posterity, into unspeakable misery.

Domesticall occasions which require sincerity after a speciall manner to be declared, are, when in Family relations, good or evill, after a speciall manner is to be conversant about. When *Elys* Sonnes abused their high calling, by a prophane conversation; then was a speciall domesticall occasion for *Ely* to declare his sincerity, to God and man, that he loved the glorie of God above the lives of his Sonnes; which because he did not seriously observe and answerably carry himselfe, but passed over a speciall occasion, with an ordinarie reproofe, therefore God fell out with him, and punished him as one that esteemed and loved his Sonnes, more then God. When God commanded *Abraham* to sacrifice his onely Sonne *Isaac*, then was a speciall domesticall occasion for *Abraham* to declare his sincerity, That to obey the will of God, was dearer to him then the life of his onely Sonne; which he seriously considered, and answerably carried himselfe; and God then openly confessed *Abraham* to be upright. *For now I know that thou feareſt God, ſeeing thou haſt not withheld thy ſonne, thine only ſon from me,* Gen. 22. 12. When *Iobs* wife bid *Iob* in his extremity to curse God and die, then was a speciall domesticall occasion for *Iob* to declare his sincerity, that he served God for nought, which *Iob* seriously 4. Exod. 10. 10.

ously considered, and answerably carried himselfe towards his wife. *Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh, what? shall we receive good at the hands of God and not evill? Iob* 2.10. So when *David*, *Sauls* sonne had a speciall advantage against *Saul* and might have slaine him, but would not, because he was the Lords annointed; then was a speciall domesticall occasion for *David* to declare his uprightnesse to God and to *Saul*, that he was an obedient son to *Saul* and desired not the life or Kingdom of his father, but to live in love & peace with him; which *David* wisely considered, and took this speciall occasion to declare his integrity to *Saul*; and this done so seasonably, his words were to *Saul* like Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver, which made him to confesse *David*, to be more righteous then himselfe, 1 *Sam.*24.17. So likewise when God met *Moses* in an Inne, and commanded him to circumcise his son, to which bloody ordinance *Zipporah* was so averse, or otherwise he should lose his life, then was a speciall domesticall occasion for *Moses* to declare his uprightnesse to God and to his Wife, that he regarded more to please God then to please his Wife; which *Moses* seriously considered, and answerably with courage carried himself, or else he had assuredly smarted severely.

3. *Social* or *Symmachicall occasions* and times, for the declaration of sincerity after a special manner, are, when good or evill are more then ordinarily conversant about in relation to such or such a Society or Corporation. When *Ioab* that bloody man, would have destroyed *Abel* that ancient City,

City, becauſe of *Sheba* a ſeditious man which fled thither, then was a ſpeciall ſymmachicall occaſion for that wiſe woman to declare her uprightneſſe, for her own good, and for the good of that City whereof ſhe was a member; that ſhe was none of them that made ſtrife and contention againſt *David*, nor that City in which ſhe lived; which ſhe wiſely conſidered, and anſwerably with wiſdome and courage carried her ſelf. *I am one of them that are peaceable in Iſrael; thou ſeekeſt to deſtroy a City & a mother in Iſrael, why wilt thou ſwallow up the inheritance of the Lord*, 2 *Sam.* 20. 19. When *Iudas* one of that Honourable Society, plotted miſchiefe againſt Chriſt, the Maſter of that Company, then was a ſpeciall time for Chriſt to declare his integrity, that the World might know that Chriſt had given *Iudas* no juſt cauſe, thus treacherouſly to behave himſelfe, but had every way ſo carried himſelfe towards him, as might have been enough, to have wonne any mans heart for ever to him. Chriſt made him as his equal, his familiar friend; he did eat of his bread, he had favours in common with the reſt of the Apoſtles; and yet played the traytor to Chriſt: this, Chriſt upon this occaſion (you know) declared. When the Holy Ghoſt after a tranſcendent manner, fell upon the Apoſtles, that they ſpake with divers tongues, ſome ſonnes of *Belial* mocked them and ſaid, *Theſe men are full of new wine*; then was a ſpecial ſymmachical occaſion for *Peter* to declare his uprightneſſe for the glory of God, and for the credit of that honorable Society of which he was: to declare to all the World, that they were not drunken

drunken, as the blind worldlings conceived, but Transcendently filled with the Holy Ghost; which the Apostle seriously considered, and answerably with much courage he declared himselfe. *But Peter standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice and said, ye men of Iudea, and all ye that dwell at Ierusalem, be this knowne unto you, and hearken unto my words; for these are not drunken as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third houre of the day; but this is that which was spoken by the Prophet Ioel, &c. Act. 2. 14, 15, 16.*

Nationall occasions and times for the declaration of sincerity after a speciall manner, are when good or evill after a speciall manner is conversant about, in relation, not to this or that particular person, but to the whole Nation. When bloody *Pharaoh* would have destroyed all *Israel*, then was a speciall nationall occasion, for *Moses* and the rest of the Worthies of the Lord, to declare their sincerity, for the glory of God, and the good of his Church; which *Moses* seriously considered, and answerably with much courage carried himselfe towards *Pharaoh*, upon all occasions, though a King: he told him his owne, and held him strictly to Gods termes; and though he shuffled and shifted, and went forth and backe as a halting rotten Prince, to worke *Moses* about to decline a little from Gods will, yet so sincerely did *Moses* declare himselfe to God and all his people, that he would not yeeld to *Pharaoh* a hoofe, nor sweare from a little of what God bid him to stand for. So when *Balaam* would have cursed all *Israel* for wealth

and

and honour, then was a speciall nationall occasion, for all Israelites indeed, to declare their sincerity, by wrestling with the Lord by prayer, to countermine all his inchantments, which they seriously contidered, and answerably with much unwearinedness doubtlesse did, or else doubtlesse God would never have withstood *Balaam* in that admirable manner as he did, and have forced him still to blesse, when he meant to curse. When *Israel* committed whoredom with the daughters of *Moab*, and joyned themselves unto *Baal-Peor*, & the anger of the Lord kindled, threatned to destroy all, then was a speciall Nationall occasion for *Moses* to declare his sincerity, that he loved the glory of God above the lives of his Brethren, which he seriously considered, and answerably with much courage did. *And Moses said unto the Judges of Israel, slay ye every one his men, that were joyned to Baal-Peor, Num.*25.5. So when *Israel* had made the a molten Calf in the absence of *Moses*, and God would have destroyed them all at once, and have made *Moses* a great Nation if he would have let him alone in his way, then was a speciall national occasion indeed for *Moses* to declare his uprightnes, that he loved the lives of his brethren above all honours and preferments this world could afford him, & that he loved the glory of God (which would have been much blemished by the Heathen, if he had destroyed *Israel*) more then his own life, which he seriously considered and answerably declared himself. And *Moses* returned unto the Lord, and said, *Oh this people have committed a great sin, &c. Yet now if thou wilt for-*

forgive their sin, and if not, blot me I pray thee, out of thy book, Exod 32. 31, 32. When *Israel* halted between God and *Baal*, making a mixture of divine worship & idolatrous together, one to colour the other, that poison might be swallowed without scrupling, to the speedy and unsensible perdition of souls; then was a speciall nationall occasion for the Prophets of the Lord to declare their uprightnesse, in crying against halting, not fearing man who shalbe made as grasse; which *Elijah* seriously considered, and answerably with much courage carried himself. *And Elijah came unto all the people, & said, how long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him: and the people answered him not a word.* When *Azariah* the Prophet told *Asa* and all *Juda*, that their halting in Gods worship was the cause of al their troubles, and that if they did zealously return to that purity of divine worship, which God required, and shake off mans inventions, it should go well with them, and that God would still be with them for good, and not for hurt, as he had been; then was a speciall nationall occasion for that people to declare their sincerity; their love to the purity of Gods ordinances, more then to their own inventions; which they seriously considered, and answerably with much zeale and life did. *And they entred into a covenant, to seek the Lord God of their fathers, with all their heart, with all their soul, that whosoever wold not seek the Lord God of Israel should be put to death, whether smal or great, whether man or woman*, 2 Chr. 15. 12, 13. So when *Haman* had plotted the death of all the Jewes, then was a speciall

speciall nationall occasion for *Mordecai* and *Esther* to declare their sincerity for the glory of God and the good of his Church; which they seriously observed, and answerably with much courage carried themselves. *Then Esther bad thē return Mordecai this answer, Go gather together all the Iewes that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three dayes, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise, and so will I go in unto the King, which is not according to the Law, and if I perish I perish, Esther* 4. 15, 16.

The reason why God in the course of his providence, brings about speciall occasions for the declaration of sincerity, are these: First, that the world and the Devill may see, that his people are indeed sincere. Speciall occasions of triall, are like *Nebuchadnezzars* fiery furnace, heat seven times hotter then ordinary, which will thorowly discover gold from drosse. These made known *Jobs* sincerity so universally, that all mouthes were stopt, which strangely thought and spoke of *Iob* before. Tis very common with the Devil and his children, to account and call Gods people hypocrites; such as do not serve God for nought, but follow Christ for loaves, and professe religion for their own ends. Now God to convince these censorious wretches, that judge amisse of the generation of the just, brings his children as it were upon the stage, in the open view of all, and puts them upon speciall trials of their uprightnesse; he sets them such tasks of doing or suffering, that shall stretch every vein in their bodies, and convince all beholders, yea, the Devill and all his children, that

they

they are since; and make them confesse with *Saul*, that they are more rigeteous then themselves. As there be some starres, which by divine institution are invisible to us, and others visible, to declare the glorie of God, and to be of use for man: So those stars which God hath placed in the lesser world, to wit, the soul of man, some of them God would have to be as it were invisible to the world; God would have a Christian, modestly, and humbly to conceal as much as may be, many gifts; but others againe God would they should declare them as much as may be, to his glorie, and the good of others; as love, and sinceritie, that they may sparkle in the eyes of all the world, as glorious beams of the divine Image. Now man being too backward to this work voluntarily, God makes and fits occasions and times for the very purpose, that shall sift a man throughly, and sound his heart to the bottome, and turn his inside outward, and so declare his sinceritie or hypocrisie to al the world. As God knowes who are his, so he will have the Devill and his children to know also who are his; that they may walk as self-condemned wretches, as *Saul* did for persecuting of them. Now to effect this, this is the thing God does, *viz.* he makes bitter pils for his children to swallow, heavie burdens for his children to beare, such as no unsound heart would touch, with one of his fingers; he heats furnaces seven times hotter then ordinary, and throws his children into them; one thing or other God so orders, that shall put his people to it, to see what mettall they be made of, that shall anatomize every string in their hearts, so that the

the Devill and all his children, to their conviction and torment, ſhall read ſinceritie written in their hearts, with capitall letters.

The ſecond reaſon why God in the courſe of his providence, brings about ſpeciall occaſions for the declaration of ſinceritie, is, that his owne glorie may thereby be greatly advanced. Speciall cures, they winne a name to a Phyſitian, more then the ordinarie cures of ſeven yeares practice: likewiſe ſpeciall victories, winne their prime agents more honour, then all the ordinary warfare of their whole life: So God by carrying his people through ſpeciall occaſions of triall, magnifies the glorie of his power, wiſdome, and love, more then a thouſand ordinarie paſſages of his providence towards them. What a name for power, God wonne to himſelfe, in the heart of *Daniel*, and the three children, for enabling them with ſuch courage, to ſtop the mouthes of Lions, and to quench the violence of fire; to expoſe themſelves to the mercie of Lions and fire, rather then to wrong their conſciences. This doubtleſſe made them more to ſing of the power and goodneſſe of the Lord, then all the paſſages of his providence towards them in the whole courſe of their lives before. Some skilfull Phyſitians will make their men ſwallow this or that ſtrong poyſon, that they may ſhew their skill before multitudes in curing of them, to winne them a name: So God he puts his people to great plunges oft-times, that hee may winne them a name for ever in their hearts, and in the hearts of all beholders,

for

for wisdome, power, and mercy in carrying them sweetly thorow all, without making shipwrack of faith and a good conscience. This know, that tis Gods great work in this world to advance his own Name, & to make it great to the ends of the Earth: now, amongst the many notable wayes he hath to magnifie his Name, this is one, and not the meanest, to wit, to put his people upon speciall occasions, of the triall of their sincerity; and by these, such an art hath God to advance his own honour, that he wins a world of hearts to himself at once, that will be so many living Trumpets to sound forth the praise of his greatnes and goodnes, from generation to generation.

Thirdly, God by his providence brings about speciall occasions for the triall of sincerity, to adde to the torture of the Devil and his children. Great trials of the godly, put the Devil and his children in hope of their utter ruine. When *Haman* had prevailed so farre, as to get a bloody decree against the Jews, he then joyed exceedingly, as one that promised himself their utter ruine: now God stepping in between, and on a sudden turning this triall of *Mordecais* to his advantage, and to *Hamans* disadvantage; to his honour, and *Hamans* disgrace, no man can tell, nor hardly conceive, how this added to *Hamans* torture. God hath admirable wayes, to make wicked men gnash their teeth, before they come to Hell; and amongst the many admirable wayes which God hath for this end, this is not one of the meanest, to put the wicked into a kinde of hope, of having their will upon the godly, by giving the godly in part (for

trials

trials sake) into their hands, and then on a sudden, snatching them farther out of their power, then ever they were before, and making them engins of the downfall of the wicked. This hath made many a proud malicious wretch, hang himselfe, stab himselfe, poyson himself, to wish himselfe any where, so he were but out of the sight and talk of them that fear God.

Lastly, God in the course of his providence, brings about speciall occasions, for the triall and discovery of sincerity, that so the joy of the upright may be augmented, in this life, and in the life to come. Speciall trials of sincerity, sincerely gone through, they procure joy unspeakable and full of glory in this life; and they work about joy unconceiveable and full of glory in the life to come. There is joy in this life for the godly, and joy unspeakable and full of glory. So there is a reward in Heaven for the godly, and a great reward, as Christ useth the epithete, *Matth.* 5. 12. Now, unspeakable joy *God* gives to them that undergoe unspeakable trials of their integrity; hee gives full flaggons of consolation to such as have been sorely shot at, as the expression is used concerning *Ioseph*, *Gen.* 49. 23. and yet have kept faithful to their God. So the great reward in Heaven, is kept for them, that undergoe great trials on earth, and yet hold fast their integrity. As Princes have their waies to advance men to great honour, honourably; to wit, by putting them upon some notable, hard, and difficult service, and if they acquit themselves well and faithfully in it, then to confer great honour upon them, not otherwise:

wise: So the King of Kings he hath his honourable waies to advance mean Christians to great spirituall dignities, here and hereafter: and amongst manie others this is one, namely, to put them upon speciall trials, and difficult tasks and services, that shall put every nerve and sinew to it; and discharging themselves well and faithfullie in these, then he puts a *long white robe upon them, and palms in their hands*, great spirituall dignities, that so they may be known to all, to be such, as *came out of great tribulation*, as *John* saith, *Rev.* 7 14.

This doctrine findeth fault with two sorts of persons, *viz.* such as of wilfulnesse, and such as of weakenesse, neglect and passe by speciall times and occasions, for the declaration of sinceritie.

Men wilfully passe by speciall times and occasions, for the declaration of sinceritie, when they shut their eyes, and will not take notice of such times, out of some self-respect. The Prophet *Isaiah* speaks of this sort of men, where he saith, *Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet* [*will he not*] *learn righteousnesse in the Land of uprightnesse* [*will he deal unjustly*] [*and will not*] *behold the Majesty of the Lord. Lord when thy hand is lifted up* [*they will not see:*] *but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envie at the people, &c. Isay* 26.10.11. God gave speciall times to this generation of men, to mend their manners, and to declare uprightnesse in their conversation to his glorie; but though this speciall favour were shewed them, yet *would they not*, so much as set about to learne righteousnesse, to acquaint their deluded conscience with what was right, and to be practised by them, God in a very

majo-

majesticall manner lifted up his hand against them to crosse and curse them in their corrupt wayes, and all to this end that they should behold it, and take shame to themselves, and break off from their unrighteous courses, and they wilfully shut their eyes, that they might not *behold the Majesty of God* against them. God gave them (of his rich favour) speciall times and opportunities to declare uprightnesse, and they made them speciall times and occasions to declare their pride and rottennesse. There is an iron sinew in the will of men naturally, and therefore let God give never so fair opportunities and occasions to them, to shew themselves for him and for his righteous wayes, yet they will not bow and stoop unto it. This iron sinew was in the neck of *Saul*, and therfore God called his sinne, in not slaying all the *Amalekites*, when he gave him a speciall opportunity thereunto *stubbornesse and rebellion*. God saw more into *Sauls* sinne then he, or many of us could imagine. He looked upon *Sauls* will in sparing *Agag*, when he might have killed him; and God saw, that *Sauls* will was resolutely set to doe this, what ever hypocritical plea he made for himselfe, and what expresse charge he had to the contrary. God gave to *Saul* there, a speciall opportunity wherein to declare his sincerity, and he as a self-willed wretch made it a special time wherein to declare his hypocrisie, to his utter disgrace and ruine both of soul and body.

Pride and malice are the cause, why men wilfully passe by special times, for the declaration of sincerity. God gave to *Herod* a special time

wherein to declare sincerity, by causing that promised branch to spring out of the root of *Jesse* in his time, which root was thought to have beene quite dead. Here was such an opportunity given *Herod*, to declare his love to Christ, by protecting & countenancing of him, as was given to no Ruler before him; and he out of pride and malice, as one that could not endure, that there should be any other King of the Iews besides himself, sought with all his policy and might to kill him: so far was he from using all his regall power, to protect and fence this choice branch from spoilers. God gave likewise to the learned Scribes & Pharisees, speciall occasions for the declaration of sincerity, by causing him that was the wisdome of God to converse amongst them, and to speak as never man spake, and to doe these things which never man did; that so they (as *Iohn* the Baptist, according to what they had heard with their ears, and seen with their eyes, might magnifie him, and labour as Gods faithfull Ministers in their place, to bring all men to believe on him, and follow him; and they out of pride and malice, used all their craft and might to crush him in the shell, to nip him in the very bud, to cloud his glorious sun, as soon as risen, that none might see his light and walk in it.

Such wretches as these, who wilfully shun speciall times and occasions for the declaration of sincerity, must be told this. That their sin is very great and answerable shall be their punishment, unlesse they repent. That your sin is great, appears by the example of *Saul* sinning in this very kinde. God gave him a speciall occasion, to declare

clare his sincerity to him, when he gave all the *Amalekites* into his hands; he wilfully taking his own course, and pleasing his own humour, you know how God cals this sin, viz. *Stubbornnesse, Rebellion*; rebellion parallell to *Witchcraft, Rejecting the word of the Lord.* God will no otherwise account your sinne, who now wilfully passe by occasions and oppottunities of declaring your sincerity to him. He will account your practice, *stubbornnesse*: and did ever any man stout it out with God, and prosper? He will account your practice *Rebellion*: and did ever any man play the rebell against God, that he was not hanged and quartered? He will account your practice a *rejecting of his Word*: and for this God will certainly reject you. You know well what heavie punishment God inflicted upon *Saul* for this sinne: he stript him of his Kingdome, nay, he stript him of the Holy Ghost, tenne thousand times more worth then his Kingdome, and gave him up to an evill spirit, to be vexed and whorried headlong into great sins, and great miseries; and according to this proceeding of divine justice, must you looke to be dealt withall. God offers you now golden opportunities, to declare your sincerity to him, by killing all *Amalakites*, every sin in your soules, which are more abominable to him, then ever was the *Amalekites*, and to the killing of all, he promiseth you his assisting grace, as he called his victorious arme to goe along with *Saul*; and if now you wilfully spare some one *Agag*, some fat of the Kine, some sinnes that bring you in pleasure & profit, look for

Peccato, supplicio parce

Saul's sauce to such sweet meats. God will take his Spirit utterly from you, and give you up to your own hearts lusts, to commit wickednes with greedines, to the aggravation of your condemnation.

Est debilitas culpabilis, sicut extinguibilis.

Secondly, the doctrine in hand findes fault with such as passe by speciall occasions and times, for the declaration of sincerity out of weaknesse: under this head four sorts of persons are to be reproved. First, such as through ignorance passe by speciall times and occasions, for the declaration of sincerity. Many men in place have often by the providence of God, speciall occasions and times put upon them, for the declaration of their sincere love to Christ and his Members, but being ignorant of what is indeed sincerity, to wit, what is indeed right, and the thing to be stood for, do nothing, shew themselves neuters, or else doe as the most doe. Some though they have a long time lived in the light, and should be able to distinguish between light and darknesse, yet through a careless improvement of the light, and resting in customs, know not what is indeed the exact will of God to be stood for; and therefore when they are by the providence of God, brought upon the stage, to set their seale to Gods truth, they as fools, lay and do they know not what.

Ignorantia horma, ignorantia culpabilis est.

Others there are, who though not ignorant of what is indeed right and good, but yet ignorant of the danger which may ensue upon the neglect of any opportunity for the declaration of sincerity, passe by one speciall occasion, and promise to themselves another, and God peradventure presently proceeds against them in a strict way of

of judicature, to the deserting of their souls, and never brings about such a golden opportunitie more unto them, wherein to shew themselves so admirably for him. *Salomon* points at this where he saith, *Because to every purpose there is time and judgement: therefore the misery of man is great upon him, Eccles.*8.6. The misery of man is great upon him indeed, that is, either ignorant of *judgement* (1) of what is right and sincere; or that is ignorant of *time*: that is, of such speciall and fit opportunities as God offers to man, for the performing of, and standing for, what is right and good. You that are ignorant of *judgement*, of what is right to be done or suffered, you will by the example of others be drawne to stand against right, in stead of standing for it, as did the ignorant multitude against Christ, concerning whom the *Apostle* speaks thus, *that had they known it they had not crucified the Lord of glory*, 1 *Cor.*2.8. The ignorant Jewes not knowing *judgement*, were by the example of the learned Scribes and Pharisees, drawn to stand against Christ, instead of standing for him, and so pulled the guilt of innocent blood upon them, which is not yet washed off.

You that are ignorant of *time*; of the speciall occasions and times, which God in the course of his providence brings about, for the declaration of sincerity, and of the dangers which ensue thereupon, must be told this, That you will open great gaps unto evill ere you are aware. Old *Ely* not taking that speciall occasion given him, to declare his sincerity, by a due punishment upon his Sonnes, they grew horribly wicked,

and Gods wrath grew quickly unquenchable hot.

Secondly, let me tell you this, That you blindefoldly passe by the choisest times of your life, to advance your owne happinesse both here and hereafter. *Phinehas* for taking that special time which God gave him, to declare his sincere love to him, won a great deale of honour to himselfe and posterity. And so likewise *Levi*, who took hold of that speciall time that God gave him to declare his sincerity; *Who said to his Father and to his Mother, I have not seen him, neither did he acknowledge his Brethren; nor knew his own children, Deut.*33.9. won unspeakable honour. So likewise *Abraham* in taking that speciall time which God gave him, to try the sincerity of his love in putting on to sacrifice his only Son, won incomparable dignity.

2. Secondly, such as through carnall fear passe by speciall occasions for the declaration of sincerity, are here to be blamed. This I thinke was *Pilates* case. God gave a speciall time unto him, for the declaration of sincere love to Christ, when Christ was brought as a malefactor before him, and yet nothing worthy of death or of bonds could be found against him. But *Pilate* out of fear to displease the Jews, passed by this golden opportunity, and passed sentence upon the innocent. This was *Peters* weakneſse God gave him a special occasion for the declaration of sincere love to Christ, when the Damsel so hardly put him to it, and yet he out of fear, passed by this golden opportunity, and denied Christ with all vehemency, which he should with all boldneſse and favour then have confessed.

Such

Such as these may doe well to keep these two Scriptures still in their minds: *I, even I am he that comforted you, Who art thou that houldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the sonne of man that shall be made as grasse? Isa.*51.12. *But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in Heaven Mat.*10.33

Secondly, such may do well also to consider this, That they will brand their name with everlasting reproach; rob God of more honour, through their cowardlinesse, then their souls are worth, though rated above all this world; and rob themselves of the Spirit of glory, which rests transcendently upon suffering Christians, as *Peter* speaks, 1 *Pet.*4 14.

Thirdly, such as passe by speciall times for the declaration of sincerity, through carnall perswasion are here to be blamed. The man of God which cried against the Altar at *Bethel*, was faulty in this kinde. God gave to him a speciall occasion to declare his sincere love to him, when that old Prophet perswaded him to doe contrary to his Commission; but he being overborn with the smooth language of the Prophet, returned back with him, and did eat bread and drink water, contrary to the expresse command of God. How the man of God was handled for this, such shall doe well to think of, that are apt to have an eare open to carnal counsel and perswasion, to be turned thereby from taking hold of speciall times for the declaration of sincerity. Three examples more there be, which are most worthy of these mens consideration, which would have this weaknesse cured in them. The first is the example of

Ioseph in his carriage to his Mistris; he would not not admit discourse with her; nor stand to hearken to her unclean perswasions, but speedily breakes away from her company and counsell both. The second is, the example of *Paul*, that would not consult with flesh and blood, when he was to take hold of speciall occasions and times, for the declaration of his sincere love to Christ. The third is the example of Christ himselfe, in his carriage to *Peter*, who when he sought to perswade him to spare himselfe, said, *Get thee behind me Satan.*

Fourthly, such as out of carnall pitty, passe by speciall occasions for the declaration of sincerity, are by this doctrine to be blamed. Good old *Ely* was faulty in this kinde. Out of pitty to his Sonnes he forbote to doe that which he should have done, to have declared his sincere love to the glory of God. Let such as are faulty in this kinde, thinke on *Elies* miserie to humble them; and on these divine examples following, to reforme them. Thinke on *Levi*, who sheathed his sword in the bowels of his brethren; nay, he knew not his father nor mother, no, nor the children of his loines, that he might declare his sincere love to the glory of God, when opportunity was offered. Thinke on *Gideon*, who threw downe the Altar of his Father, that he might declare his sincere love to God, when he called him hereunto. Thinke on *Asas* dethroning his mother, and stamping her Idols to powder, 2 *Chron.* 15.16. And on *Solomons* denying the request of his good mother *Bathsheba*, when she requested a bad thing, to wit, *Abishag* the Sunamite, for *Adonijah*,

Adonijah, which was given to lie in *Davids* bosome in his old age to keepe him warme, and to cherish him. All these worthies were not swayed by foolish pitty; but looked over all relations, to obey the will of God, and to declare their sincere love to him, upon all occasions offered.

Wherefore, The second and last use of this Doctrine, shall be for exhortation. Seeing there be speciall times and occasions for the declaration of sincerity, and that many have broken through all impediments, to take hold of them, let us also strive thus to doe. Two things I would exhort you to, to observe such times; and secondly, to take fast hold of them. Seeing there be speciall times for the declaration of sincerity, let us give all diligence to observe, when they are by God offered to us. Shut not your eyes against such times; nor through ignorance and carelessesse overlook such times.

But how should I know speciall times and occasions for the declaration of sincerity?

I answer, by these three things. First, by the dependency of Gods glory and thine own eternall good, upon times, occasions, and actions. If the glory of God, and thine owne eternall good depend much upon the doing or suffering of this or that thing; so depend, that if not performed, both Gods glory and thine own peace fall to the ground; this is a speciall time and occasion for the declaration of sincerity; and therefore observe it.

Secondly, by strong internall motions and movings to this or that duty, together with the hand of God externally in a speciall manner, by mercies

mercies and corrections seconding. Tis said (you know) that the Spirit of the Lord moved *Sampson* at times in the Campe of *Dan*. That is, God after a speciall manner stirred him up now and then, to that great work of fighting with the *Philistims*, to which he had assigned him. So likewise now, the Spirit of God doth at times move mens hearts, after a powerfull & speciall manner, to this duty or that, to the mortification of this lust or that, and seconds this strong internall motion, by such mercies and corrections, as may most suitably tend to further this motion, and spur on backward man to the performance of this duty. This is a special time for the declaration of sincerity; observe it. *Balaam* (doubtlesse) had speciall motions and internall stirrings not to goe about and curse *Israel*, and the Angel of the Lord without seconding to hinder him; and yet for all this sword within, and sword without, he would on. You that will do as he did, must look to fare as he did. So on the other hand, *Mordecai* (doubtlesse) had strong internall motions and stirrings to labour for the good of the Jewes, and the downfall of proud *Haman*; & the providence of God externally, after a speciall manner seconding; which he observed, & answerably moved in this golden opportunity, and so wonne much honour to God, to himself and good to his Church.

3. Thirdly, by the Word of God. The Word of God is so full and perfect, that it plainly sets before every man that studies it, what is of weight to be done, and what is of moment not to be done. It sets forth things to be done, or not to be done, with

with all the circumstances about them, which makes them of more speciall consequence, or lesse. So that if a man looke upon an action or occasion by the word of God, he shall presently be able to see, of what consequence the thing is, and how answerably he is to move in and about it, whether with more or lesse care and diligence. Hence tis that Christ willed those which he urged to imbrace him, to search the Scriptures concerning him; intimating that there they should see, of what consequence this work was, of imbracing Christ, and following him.

Secondly, as I would have you to take notice, so I would have you to take hold of speciall times and occasions for the declaration of sincerity. When you have espied those golden opportunities, fasten upon them. 2.

But how should I take hold of those golden opportunities aright? Quest.

I answer, the taking hold of these golden opportunities aright, consists in these three things, *viz.* That a man when such times are brought about to him by the providence of God, set himselfe, first, speedily; and secondly, throughly, to answer them; and thirdly, that he go about all in the strength of Christ. First, a man that would take hold aright of speciall times and occasions for the declaration of sincerity, must be speedy in this work. Time, we say, tarries for no man. And opportunity is the extract and quintessence of time, and farre more gliding. Opportunity let slip, possibly a man may have never such another, though he should live an hundred yeares. Hence tis that Christ

Christ speaks so dolefully to *Ierusalem*, which had slipt her opportunity, *O Ierusalē, Ierusalē, if thou hadst known in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace! but now they are hidden from thine eyes.*

Secondly, as you must set your selves speedily so you must set your selves throughly to this worke, if you would take hold of these golden opportunities aright. That is, you must set your selves to declare sincerity, answerable to the occasions and speciall opportunity which *God* offereth. For this is to take hold of these precious opportunities aright, to wit, when speciall occasions for the declaration of sincerity present themselves, after a speciall manner, to declare our sincerity in them. When a speciall occasion of this kind was offered to *Paul* by *Peters* judaizing, you know with what courage and spirit *Paul* declared himself answerable to the occasion. *To whom, I gave place, not for a moment. Whom I withstood to the face, for he was to be blamed, Gal.* 2. And *Moses* likewise, though a very meek, quiet, and patient spirited man, yet when a speciall occasion for the declaration of his sincerity was offered, by *Aaron* and the peoples making a Calfe, with what a Lion-like courage did he shew himself? And old *Ely* because he did shew himself thus to declare his sincerity, when his sinnes oft provoked God, to wit, answerable to that speciall occasion offered, you know what construction God made of his milde cold carriage, in that urgent weighty matter, between God and his sonnes.

Thirdly, a man that would declare sincerity aright in all occasions offered thereunto, must set about

about this worke in the ſtrength of Chriſt, and not in any ſtrength of his owne. *I will goe in the ſtrength of the Lord God: I will make mention of thy righteouſneſs, even of thine only*, Pſal. 71. 16. *I will goe in the ſtrength of the Lord God, &c.* That is, in every deſigne, and in every buſineſſe I wil depend wholly upon the aide and aſſiſtance of God, and upon no ſtrength of my own. Thus we know *David* went againſt *Goliah*, when he would declare his ſincere love to God, whom *Goliah* blaſphemed. Thus muſt we do when ever we ſet up upon any opportunity, wherein to declare our ſincere love to God, or elſe we ſhall do as *Peter*, deny Chriſt inſtead of ſtanding for him anſwerably to the occaſion offered.

Now, that what hath been ſaid touching this point, of taking hold of golden opportunities offered, for the declaration of ſincerity, you may all obſerve and follow, thinke on theſe two or three things. God cals for it: Conſcience cals for it: Church and State cals for it: Soule and body wil elſe ſeverely ſmart for it. Firſt, think on this, God cals for this at our hands, that we ſhould declare ſincerity according to the ſpecial occaſions calling thereunto. *Gather your ſelves together, &c.* ſaith the Lord to the diſobedient Jewes, and in them to us, before the decree come forth, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you. *Seek ye the Lord all ye meek of the earth, ſeek righteouſneſſe, ſeek meekneſſe: it may be ye ſhall be hid in the day of the Lords anger*, Zeph. 2. 1, 2, 3. A ſpeciall time was offered, wherein to ſhew themſelves for God and for good, & God called upon them carefully

fully to take it. as they tendred their temporall and eternall good.

God cals us now to the declaration of sincerity, as by his word, so by his workes, both of mercy and justice. God hath loaded us with mercies and corrections of all sorts, and all for this end, that we should declare our sincere love to him, answerable to all opportunities offered hereunto, *Many a time (as the Psalmist saith) hath he turned away his anger*, and hath not made a full end of us, when we have highly provoked him thereunto, and all for this end, that we should declare our sincere love to him, answerable to all opportunities offered thereunto. To the language of the Lord by the Prophet *Amos* I may fitly here allude. God hath withholden the raine from us, when there have been but three moneths to the harvest: God hath caused it to rain upon one Shire and County, and not upon another: God hath smitten us with Blasting and Mildew, and all this to bring us to declare a sincere love to him, according to all opportunities offered; & yet we are backward hereunto. God hath smitten us with the pestilence againe and againe; and with the Sword hath he threatned us againe and againe, and all this to bring us on to declare a sincere love to him, according to all occasions offered; and yet we are backward hereunto. *Therefore thus will I do unto thee*, saith the Lord to Israel, *and because I will do thus, prepare to meet the Lord thy God, O Israel, Amos* 4. So say I to you, forasmuch as all the milde meanes which God hath hitherto used are not effectuall for this end, to bring us to declare our sincere love

to

to him, according to all opportunities offered, therfore we must expect that God will take some severe course with us for the time to come; & because we are to expect this at the hands of God, let us prepare to meet the Lord our God. Let every one of us repent of our halting and time-serving past, and for the time to come let us set our selves to declare a sincere love to God, according to all occasions offered.

Conscience cals us hereunto, as well as God. Speciall occasions for the declaration of sincerity, now so frequently and so openly shew themselvs, that every mans conscience tels him, that he shold shew himself a great deale more then he doth, for God, his King, and Countrey. As in the night the Owles and the Bats looke abroad: so in these dark sad daies of sin and wickednesse, the eyes of Owles and Bats, the eyes of wicked and secure sinners begin to open, and their consciences begin to tell them, that they should do something more now then they have done, for God, and the good of his Church and kingdome. 2.

Church and State cals for it. They both now with one dolefull voice cry out to us in the language of the Psalmist: *Who will rise up for me against the evill doers? or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity? Psa.* 94.16. *They know not, neither will they understand, they walk on in darknesse: all the foundations of the earth are out of course. Psal.* 82.5. 3.

Finally, soule and body will else severely smart for it, if we doe not now step in, to take hold of all opportunities for the declaration of sincerity.

Curse

Curse ye Meroz (said the Angel of the Lord) curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof: because they came not to the help of the Lord against the mighty, Judg. 5 23. This curse may al such expect who now come not forth, to declare their sincere love to Christ and his truth, upon al just occasions calling thereunto. The souls of such Christians are now neglect and put by those golden opportunities, of declaring their sincere love to Christ, will be given up to luke warmnesse, coldnesse, deadnesse, hardnesse, and some to obstinatenesse, and malitiousnesse against God and all goodnesse: which are all soule curses with a witnesse. And such bodies as have in them such cursed soules as these, you may assure your selves, they shall meet with misery enough first or last. *Paul* intimates someting to this purpose, where he saith. *At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge*, 2 Tim. 4. 16. Such as take not hold of special times and occasions for the declaration of their sincere love to Christ and his truth, may fear that sad things will be first or last laid to their charge, such as shall make body and soul shake. Let us therefore all, as we love our bodies and soules, and as we profess love to Christ, which should be dearer to us then our bodies or souls, take hold of all opportunities for the declaration of sincerity. As God brings about special times and occasions for this end, so let every one of us after a special manner take hold of them that we may after a special manner be honoured of God, both here and hereafter. *Divi.*

Trinum Dei gloria.